

Adventures and  
Misadventures  
in  
Canada

Lefty



*The Author.*

# Adventures and Misadventures

OR

An Undergraduate's Experiences in Canada

*Experientia stultorum magistra est*

A SIMPLE NARRATIVE  
TOLD IN XXXIX EPISODES  
WITH 14 ILLUSTRATIONS

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BY

"LOFTY"



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## A WESTERNER.

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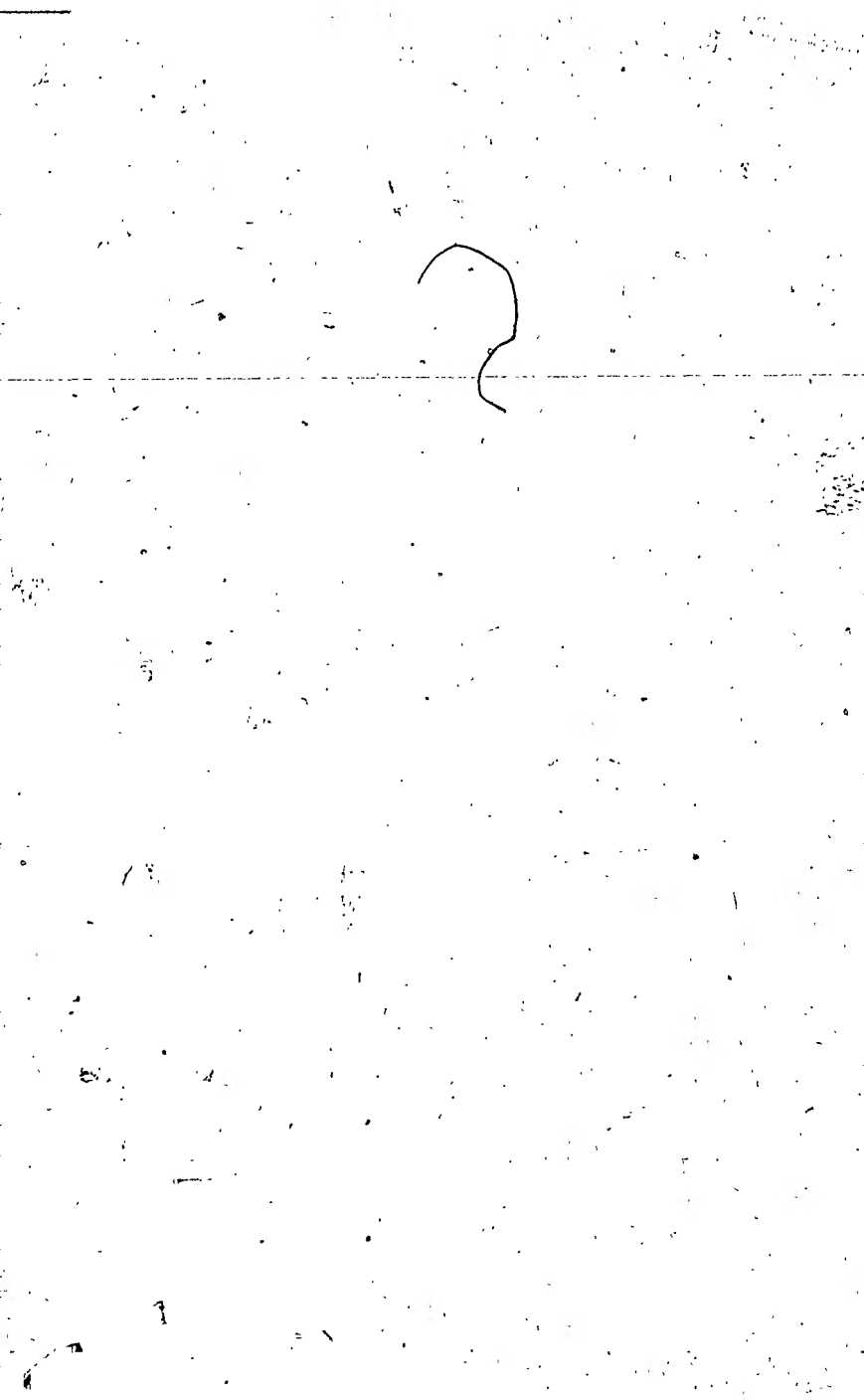
My fathers sleep o'er the sunrise plains,  
And each one sleeps alone.  
Their trails may dim to the grass and rains,  
For I choose to make my own.  
I lay proud claim to the blood and name,  
But I lean on no dead kin.  
My name is mine for the praise or scorn,  
And the world began when I was born,  
And the world is mine to win.

CHARLES B. CLARKE, JR.



DEDICATION.

TO MY OLD CANTAB. PALS PAST AND PRESENT  
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.



## PREFACE.

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THIS is, as stated on the title-page, but a simple narrative, containing nothing which is particularly instructive but much food for thought on the part of anyone wishing to "take a hand," especially a lone hand.

I trust that the tale will prove easy to read for what it is, viz., just the adventures of an undergraduate who had the idea that it was more easy to graduate in the rough and tumble school of life, than inside the archaic structures of his 'Varsity and the pleasant refuge of his home; and not finding this the case, learnt the truth of the saying, "*Experientia stultorum magistra est.*"

What is said in the coming pages is, in no way meant to deter rebellious or ambitious youth from seeking adventure, for I realise the futility of such an attempt. It will do no harm to give those anxious to try the Simple Life (without money) in Canada some idea of what that life is like. Beer and skittles are not to everyone's taste, and many of my episodes were anything but pleasant to me. Still, I challenged Fate and got my whack in reply. Those who do the same must look for similar results.

I say this because I fully recognise that the spirit of adventure in the Englishman has gone far, perhaps farther than anything else, in impelling him to help build up this wonderful Empire of ours. What the Empire owes to her Prodigal Sons who have made good is far more than the Man-in-the-Street seems able to realise. The more the pity. If I have not made good I learnt much, and especially was made to realise the use and importance of a sense of humour. This is essential to all Prodigals; it may not be everything, but is a great asset. When Ali Baba entered the magic cave he still had to load up his asses and get safely away; but without knowing the magic word he never would have entered the cave. To possess a sense of humour and to be able to make use of it, even in the tightest corners, is the Open Sesame to the Cave of Possible Success. This I have learnt, and in the following pages I try to pass my knowledge on to others. I trust no one will be too bored over reading what I have to say:

Those who peruse the whole will agree that, when possible, it is good to "look before you leap."  
*Experto credat.*

I would like to add that whilst the rougher elements of Canadian life which I encountered and now describe and discuss are not imaginary, the characters depicted, as connected with the various episodes, are entirely fictitious.

THE AUTHOR.

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# Adventures and Misadventures,

OR

An Undergraduate's Experiences in Canada.

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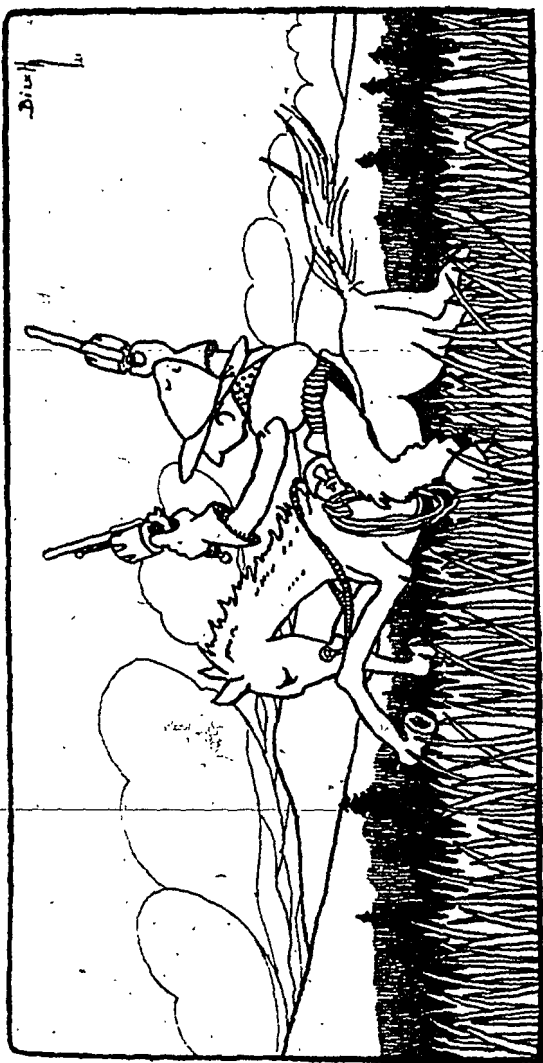
## EPISODE I.

I dream Dreams and find the Reality very different.

WHEN one is young, one is foolish. When one is old, one is still foolish, but there is less excuse. Therefore at the age of nineteen there was a certain amount of excuse for my being so foolish as to desire —“to leave my home and sail away.”

I have two reasons to offer for this untimely decision—(1) A girl. (2) Robert W. Service. The former vastly more important than the latter. It is quite possible that if Service had never written the “Trail of '98,” I should never have conceived a rapid but improbable way of making my fortune.

I imagined myself racing to the Yukon with a gun in each hand, squatting on a claim (having first shot all and sundry who dared cross my path), and finding



I IMAGINED MYSELF RACING TO THE YUKON WITH A GUN IN EACH HAND.



sufficient gold within a year to make me rich for life. Once I had the gold the girl was mine. Unfortunately, I didn't find the gold, but I got the girl.

I never for a moment imagined the unromantic part that a third-class ticket would play in this "Un-Serviceable" endeavour.

I got this mental trouble at the end of my second year at the 'Varsity. I was sick of the life, or rather the 'Varsity had got sick of me. I was young enough to want to be my own master. To-day I am a few years older and perhaps a little wiser.

How to get to the Yukon was a question which needed much consideration. It was not quite so easy as jumping on a 'bus for Piccadilly.

I was much too big a fellow to think of becoming a stowaway.

I couldn't conceive the probability of being comfortably wedged between two bales of something or other. Nor was I prepared to fast for an unlimited time. MONEY had to be found.

To dream of money is vastly different to having it. Let this originality pass.

I had in my possession a very handsome gold watch given to me by our family solicitor. (Solicitors do not often give things away.) In this watch I saw my

only salvation, and having once heard that time meant money, saw no reason why this should prove an exception to the rule. I therefore "popped" the watch for £25, fully realising, however, that this sum would not see me to the Yukon. Having then discussed the matter with my brother, he managed to procure for me a further £25. With £50 in my pocket I thought it might be possible to get within measurable distance of my destination.

I solicited the aid of our ancient and alcoholic retainer, who helped me to leave the house without attracting attention.

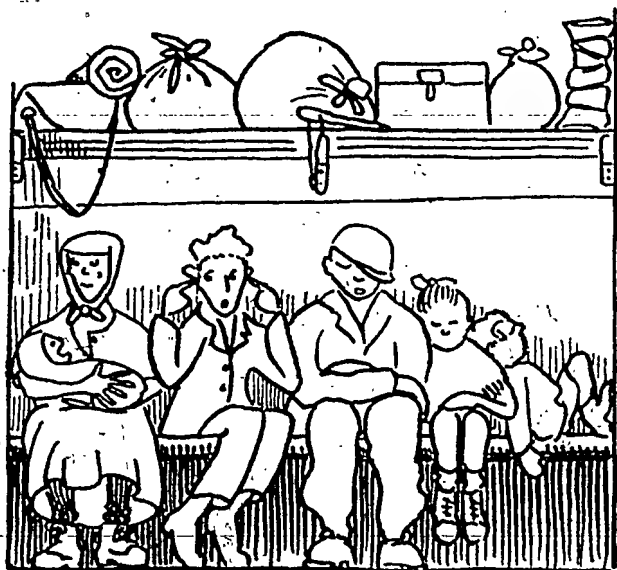
I did not relish taking a third-class ticket, but remembering that I only possessed £50, I bowed my head to fate and joined the "happy band of emigrants."

To read about an emigrant merely conveys the idea of "one who removes from his own country to settle (permanently) in another"; but when one personally becomes an emigrant it is a vastly different matter. You feel an outcast, and quickly find you are looked upon as one.

In the early hours of a Thursday morning in the beginning of 19— I left for Avonmouth with a third-class ticket, unlimited ambition and a dauntless heart.

My first taste of emigration was anything but encouraging. The carriage in which I found myself was filled with the

greasiest, filthiest specimens of humanity—three Italian men, an Italian woman, to say nothing of the child, and two Swedes with their respective wives. None of them could have seen the inside of a bath for



I FOUND MYSELF SITTING WITH THE GREASIEST,  
FILTHIEST SPECIMENS OF HUMANITY.

weeks. The air was perfumed with stale garlic and rank cigars. They all talked—a medley of inconceivable sounds.

I tried my best to feel comfortable and

enter into the spirit of the thing and, in fact, did take a long pull at my brandy flask.

As luck would have it, I sat next to the woman and her child—the latter deliberately howled and shrieked immediately his mother ceased feeding him. Very natural, and, it is to be supposed, inevitable, but somewhat embarrassing to an ex-undergraduate who had quite forgotten the time when he experienced the same delight.

If this was to be my first taste of emigration my heart failed me when I thought of the boat. I would willingly have pulled the cord and stopped the train. Cheerfully would I have given £5 to the guard for the infringement of the railway company's laws; still more cheerfully have walked home. But I didn't. I couldn't face the ridicule of being called a "quitter." Somehow, it is very difficult to turn back when one has cast the die—there is nothing stronger than a man's self-respect; long may it be so.

At length Avonmouth was reached. I was heartily sick of the suckling babe; irritated with the ceaseless babel, and quite ill with the odour of garlic and vile tobacco.

I rejoiced, however, at the sight of the *R—*, subsequently, I believe, torpedoed by the Germans.

Having taken a steerage ticket, I was shown, none too politely, into the dismal lower portion of the ship.

Here, to my disgust, I discovered—not one howling baby, but scores—like mosquitoes in some dismal swamp. The air hummed with their plaintive cries, and all seemed to feed in the same primitive way—primitive, because until then I had only seen babies in charge of their nurses in the London parks.

All the dregs of humanity seemed to have collected together. (I can't understand the Dominion wanting these people.) Even when saying so I must ask to be excused for my intolerance, being then very young. The women squatted on the deck; the men stood in groups smoking and spitting. How hard it was not to show my disgust. Little did I realise that I was on the threshold of life; so far I had had only a superficial conception of it. My blood turned to water. The smell of the ship, mingled with that of the motley crowd, was far worse than the train. The noise was deafening. I detached myself from the crowd and found solace at the stern of the ship.

I felt myself a fool in leaving a comfortable home for this. I hated Service and his stupid book, and took, momentarily, quite an acute dislike to my girl.

At last we swung off, and dear old

England slowly vanished from my tearful gaze. I felt dreadfully homesick, and munched chocolate and sipped brandy. This didn't do me a bit of good; but it made me sick.

A dirty-looking steward, resenting my polite inquiries, showed me to my bunk, which I discovered to my chagrin had to be shared with five of those d——d organ-grinders. One of them was sitting on his bunk, directly over mine, blowing a mouth-organ, and dangling his filthy feet over my pillow.

They looked upon me with suspicion and none too kindly, and in my present state of despondency I drew a mental and lurid picture of knives and sundry other little Italian accessories.

These thoughts did not tend to make me feel very cheerful. I began to dread the night. I had always loved the atmosphere of Italy, but the deck at that moment seemed more attractive.

The bugle sounding for tea came as a welcome relief. We were herded into a bare-looking mess-room. The tables were devoid of cloths, and the benches were as hard as nails.

We were obliged to scramble in as best we could. Each emigrant had before him a bowl, knife, and thick bread and margarine. Stewards poured tea into the bowls from cavernous-looking jugs.

I had hoped to have been lucky enough to find myself seated next to an Englishman, but unfortunately there wasn't the sign of one, and so had to take my tea in silence.

I soon sickened of the chewing rabble, and on reaching the deck discovered a very excitable crowd outside one of the cabin doors. I asked a gesticulating Russian what all the fuss meant. "Zat—oh, nottings—a voman 'as been born a baby." I immediately pictured to myself the possibilities of re-incarnation, but more quickly came to the conclusion that she must have given birth to an offspring. As if there weren't enough babies already on board! Really the laws of nature are very inconsiderate. However, having learnt that the mother was doing well, I proceeded to my cabin and threw myself on to my bunk, fully dressed and tired out.

How could anyone undress amid this motley crowd throwing suspicious glances at every movement one made? I suppose I really must have looked rather out of place in my Savile Row clothes.

Sleep was impossible; the place was a ghastly nightmare—women groaning—children screaming—men gambling and often getting into heated arguments, their raucous voices audible above the din of all the other strange sounds.

In another corner the love songs of a young Italian helped me for the moment to forget the sordid surroundings. The song was familiar, and in my longing for companionship I tried to ask him, in my bad Italian, if it was a "rag-time." To my astonishment my question put him into a rage. "Rag-a-time—dat is no rag-a-time—dat is one-a-fine—a—Italian song. Rag-a-time—per-a-Bacco!"

I realised I had made a very grave mistake and had been sadly wanting in tact, but appeased him by asking him to continue. He possessed an exceedingly fine tenor voice; it is a pity one could not sometimes hear as good at the Queen's Hall. These natural Italian voices are not uncommon; I had heard many on the banks of the Arno. They are quite unspoilt by training, and they sing with a natural charm and sentiment.

The others continued to gamble furiously, fascinating me with the venom they displayed. They smoked continuously, which made the foulness of the cabin indescribable. However, the steward soon put an end to this by poking his head through the door and yelling "Lights out."

There was much grumbling and muttering, but things soon settled down. I found these chaps have a great respect for British discipline.



The sight of the mess-room the next morning was too much for me, and determined me to change my quarters at any cost. The tip I slipped to the deck-steward found me the purser's cabin.

He was a kindly man, and took a great deal of trouble in finding me a bunk on the second-class deck. The change was a delightful one.

II.—I ascend from . . . . . to more mundane  
Quarters—and meet O'Leary.

My new companions were an Englishman and an Irishman, and they greeted me with a cheery "Hullo, youngster!" which was most encouraging.

They were like me, failures, and were seeking fresh fortunes, but had the disadvantage of being older men.

I took an immediate liking to O'Leary, the Irishman, who didn't conceal the fact that he had run through a small fortune in an incredibly short time. This circumstance did not in any way affect his spirits; it was not the first time he had been to the Colonies under the same conditions. In fact, it seemed to be a habit with him.

Hopson was equally jolly, but not quite such a philosopher; he would periodically lapse into a moody silence and brood over his lot.

Of the two men I infinitely preferred the Irishman.

When the breakfast bugle sounded (the second-class passengers have this meal far later than the steerage) I felt a happier man. The three of us went down together.

The mess-room was certainly a great change, and the passengers were an improvement on the Dagos.

I can't recollect ever having eaten a larger breakfast, and needed it badly.

Breakfast finished, O'Leary and I sauntered on deck, which I found exceedingly pleasant after the dinginess of the steerage quarters.

O'Leary's personality was so open and charming that I didn't hesitate in confiding my plans to him, and told him I rather hoped to go in for journalism. He offered to help me, if he could, and we decided to stick together as long as it was possible. I was delighted at the prospect of having such a bright and cheery companion.

In the midst of our conversation, a steward came up and asked if I was Mr. Lofty, and handed me a Marconigram. It was from my father, begging me to return, and offering me a first-class passage home on the next homeward-bound ship. I showed it to O'Leary, who advised me strongly "not to make a fool

of myself, but to return," and warned me of the hardships of seeking a fortune in the West.

This sound advice I refused to take: having started on my journey I intended to see it through.

A few minutes later the steward returned, and said the captain wished to see me in his cabin.

I was surprised and somewhat perturbed at this sudden summons following the Marconigram. O'Leary laughingly told me that I should be probably clapped in irons. I was far more afraid of the captain's sermon than of his "irony."

To my surprise the captain greeted me in the most kindly manner, offered me a whisky-and-soda, and a really good cigar, both of which I accepted with gratitude, not being certain as to when the next chance would fall to my lot.

He asked me how I had enjoyed the steerage, and whether I wasn't repenting my impulsiveness. He then showed me a long cablegram from my father asking him to persuade me to return, and giving me every facility to do so.

I was much touched at my father's anxiety for the return of his prodigal son, but far more "touched" in refusing to join in the ceremony of eating the "fatted calf."

## 14 ADVENTURES AND MISADVENTURES

The captain gave me a most spirited description of the "rocks ahead," and begged me to alter my decision; but all the arguments of this kindly man were to no purpose.

I was as obstinate as Lot's wife, and only differed from that poor lady in one respect: I refused to look back.

As soon as the captain perceived that no argument would avail he asked me what my plans were. I told him of my journalistic ambitions. In this, he said, he could help me, and would introduce me to the ex-mayor of Wollaboo, who was a passenger aboard his ship. He was a man of some influence in that city, and would no doubt give me a helping hand.

I thanked the captain for his kind interest in my very uncertain future, and after one or two more words of advice he dismissed me. I rejoined O'Leary.

The Irishman called me every name under the sun for being so foolish as not to comply with my father's wishes. "Ye silly divil," he said, "phwat do ye think ye can do in that 'Canuckish' country? Ye be orlroight at a garden party, but the divil of a bit of good in a moining camp."

At this juncture Hopson joined us, followed by a Roman Catholic priest, whom he introduced to us as Father Donelly. I liked this priest, a kindly broad-minded

man, who didn't thrust his religion on us. He told me he was going to some town (the name I have forgotten) to "shepherd the Roman Catholic flock."

He sadly shook his head when O'Leary told him "I was a bad bhoy and had left my home." However, this in no way interfered with our becoming fast friends.

No one could tell better stories than the padre, excepting perhaps O'Leary. Hopson's choice of stories would often make the poor old padre unconsciously cross himself.

In the afternoon the captain kept his word and introduced me to the ex-mayor.

I shall never forget my first impression of this man. He was very tall, and yet looked broad, and in his fur coat he looked colossal.

When he opened his mouth to say "How do you do?" it startled me to discover that every tooth in his head was pure gold. What was the use of my going all the way to the Yukon to search for this precious metal when it was so near at hand?

He must have thought me very rude, but for a few moments I was speechless with the fascination of this walking goldmine. I wonder he didn't fear a "hold-up," or some tramp knocking him on the head and making off with the swag.

When he faced the sun the effect was dazzling; I had to turn my head away for fear of my falling into temptation.

He continually smoked strong cigars, which made me cough; and constantly expectorated, which made me give him a wide berth.

He was quite pleasant to me, but I didn't take to him at all. He gave me a feeling of repulsion; and made me realise for the first time that there might be something in Darwin's theory.

He promised to do all he could for me, and advised me to go straight to Wollaboo.

He had a daughter, who was as pretty as he was hideous, but she was a very stand-offish young lady, and so I left her severely alone. *Her* teeth were like pearls.

I had now been on the boat three days, and my cheerful companions had made a difference to my funds; the 'Varsity had not taught me to be economical.

### III.—How can one marry without a Wife—or, land in Canada without Fifty Dollars?

O'Leary had given me the disturbing news that I needed fifty dollars to show the Customs officer before being allowed to land. This worried me a good deal, as I quite foresaw that I wouldn't have this

amount at my disposal by the time we reached Montreal.

Every emigrant is required to show his ability to keep himself until he gets a job, or that he has sufficient money to pay his fare by train to his destination, otherwise he is sent back as an undesirable.

I talked the matter over with my friends. The padre immediately offered to lend me the balance required, which could be repaid him when the officials were satisfied. This offer I gratefully accepted.

Each day on board brought very little change to our lives, except perhaps to our finances, which were diminishing in a most alarming manner. It is surprising how much one can spend in a ship's smoking-room.

On the ninth day we sighted land. There was great excitement on board, especially in the steerage. There, beyond the distant horizon, it might be that our destinies would be fulfilled in one way or another.

I felt myself a Christopher Columbus, and at the same time experienced a thrill of expectancy with not a little dread.

My trend of thought was disturbed by the knowledge that we were to go through a medical inspection at Anticosti (which is an island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence).

O'Leary told me it was a pretty severe test, and anything wrong, back you went.

It was not until I was told this that I discovered two spots on my chest, and immediately imagined chicken-pox, small-pox, or at least some disease which would stop my landing.

That evening we made merry in the smoke-room. It was to be our last night on board. I was sorry to have to say good-bye to the friends I had made, and still more sorry to leave the comfort of the ship, realising that I might not be so comfortable in the future.

Just before we turned in the padre blessed us and bade us God-speed. I felt real emotion in bidding adieu to this good priest. The old man seemed equally upset. It is so refreshing to meet a broad-minded, big-hearted priest who expects none to be perfect, and recognises the fact that he isn't so himself.

#### IV.—Canadian Inspection Horrors.

Very early the next morning we found ourselves passing Cape Race and the fog-bound coast of Newfoundland. It looked very desolate, damp and depressing.

The *R*— stopped her engines off the island of Anticosti.

Here it was that the medical officer was



waiting to board us from a tug which had been lying-to pending our arrival.

With him came a host of journalists, detectives and Customs officials.

We were ordered to separate ourselves from the women for medical examination. The steerage were to be examined last; I was thankful that I had not remained with them.

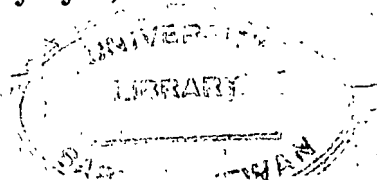
The detectives nosed around and made us all feel we were suspects. At one time I was afraid that they might have received orders to send me back to England, not being yet twenty-one years of age.

The women were examined first, many of them being sent back. Some were of doubtful character, some were ill, some pretended they were joining their husbands. They obviously had not reckoned on the vigilance of the Canadian Intelligence Service.

Our turn came last, and one by one we filed into the ship's M.O.'s cabin.

The medical inspector was typically Canadian—curt and business-like—he wasted no time in saying “Pleased to see you,” or “How-do-you-do?” but he simply barked at us with a twang (called a Canadian accent), and curtly told you to take your shirt off, put your tongue out, and so forth.

He looked at my eyes, took no notice of



my spots, asked me a few questions, and said: "I guess he's all right; next."

Whereupon I found myself hustled out,



I FOUND MYSELF HUSTLED OUT WHILE VAINLY  
TRYING TO KEEP MY TROUSERS UP.

still struggling with my shirt, and trying,  
vainly, to keep my trousers up, and didn't

look very dignified, as can well be imagined.

I also found myself the proud possessor of an Emigration Card, written in about ten different languages, denoting that I was a bachelor, an emigrant, and a Protestant.

I was thankful to see O'Leary a few minutes later emerge from the inspection cabin, struggling violently with his clothes and swearing like a trooper.

O'Leary thought the M.O. the rudest man he had ever met; Hopson said it wasn't rudeness, but merely the Canadian manner: it was just a question of getting used to it.

As soon as the inspection was finished we resumed our journey, and slowly made our way up the St. Lawrence.

The country on both banks of the river was very flat and uninteresting. Wooden and very primitive-looking houses were dotted about at irregular intervals.

They were mostly painted white or dirty yellow, and all possessed verandahs of varying colours. Even Balham looked more interesting.

From what I could see from the deck, the roads were about on a par with some of our worst country lanes. I noticed one solitary Ford car trying its best to imitate a scenic railway. One cannot disconcert a

Ford car; they are perfectly wonderful and very popular over there.

My first glimpse of Canada, far from impressing, depressed me. If it had been a fine day I might very possibly have formed an entirely different opinion of it.

After two hours of wooden houses we reached Quebec, and, to my bitter disappointment, could see very little of the town from the boat.

The Heights of Abraham frowned down upon us, and as O'Leary aptly put it: "It must have been a hell of a job for Wolfe's men to scale them."

Here many of the emigrants and passengers left us, as we were proceeding to Montreal.

Having two hours to wait before resuming the journey, we decided to land and see as much of the town as we could.

We didn't have time to penetrate into the decent part of the town, but as much as we did see gave us a very fair conception of what we were to expect in our future wanderings.

The roads were shocking, and the recent rains had turned them into veritable quagmires.

The outlook was so dismal that we were only too glad to return to the warmth and comfort of the ship. Even O'Leary's spirits were damped, and he remarked

that "Oireland was the divil's place, but this was surely his home."

A few hours later we arrived at Montreal, and were relieved to see that we had at last reached a city which looked a little like the "Old Country."

The padre kept his word and advanced me my landing-money, and as soon as I had shown it to the officials I returned it to him.

After our luggage had been examined the padre bade us good-bye. We had grown very attached to this good man, who had proved himself a true Christian in every sense of the word. I often wonder what became of him, and whether I shall ever see him again. The world would be the better off if there were more of his kind dotted about it.

#### V.—In Canada.

The three of us had decided to stay in Montreal one or two days to enable us to pick up what information we could of the general conditions prevailing. Our ultimate goal was Wollaboo, unless we found work plentiful in Montreal.

We secured cheap lodgings at no great distance from the station.

Our quarters were clean, but that is about all one could say in their favour.

The house was wooden—even to the landlady—I never saw her smile or say a kind word. Her vocabulary consisted chiefly of “I guess so—sure—hur—hur—yep and nope” (which corresponds to our “yes” or “no”), and sundry other snappy sounds—said very quickly and in one breath—gave one a very fair imitation of a defective exhaust.

Our bedroom (which O’Leary and I shared) consisted of two beds, “entirely surrounded by wood.” In a corner a soap-box made shift for a washstand, and perched upon it was the smallest wash-basin I have ever seen. We couldn’t repress a smile at the thought of fat Hopson trying to wash in it. O’Leary spent at least a quarter of an hour looking for the handle of what reminded me of a Scotch porridge-bowl.

There was no tooth-mug, but it is possible that in this district the use of such a necessity had not yet been discovered.

O’Leary remarked: “Whhat does it mather? We are both travelling incog.” With this care-free Irishman it was impossible to be anything but philosophical.

Montreal is a fine place, and compares favourably with our larger provincial towns.

The one thing which struck me as being extraordinary was the telegraph poles—

stuck on the edge of the pavements—giving the town an untidy, unfinished appearance.

It did not take us long to discover that work was very scarce in Canada, and especially in the East. In most parts there seemed to be a good deal of unemployment.

However, I still had great hopes that Wollaboo would prove an exception to the rule; at all events, the ex-mayor had promised to help me. Therefore the three of us decided that it was little use wasting time, but that we should push on to Wollaboo.

The following morning we took Colonist tickets, which would correspond to our fifth class, were there such a one, and in high spirits we boarded the train en route for the "Golden West."

As soon as we had taken our seats I knew I was in for even a worse experience than that of the steerage.

The Colonist carriage is very similar to our Pullman, but with the difference which makes all the difference; it was utterly devoid of comfort.

The seats faced one another in the same way as on our metropolitan railways, but with a much wider passage down the centre. At both ends of the carriage were a couple of square-shaped rooms with cooking-stoves and wash-basins.

These places were not over-clean, and after emigrant occupation they were more like pigsties. Unfortunately the train was full of emigrants, as it happened to be a special boat-train for the Western States.

Our particular carriage swarmed with "Dago" children. We didn't know which were the most objectionable—the parents or the children; both were very dirty and noisy. The Russians dirtier still; not to mention the Swedes, Norwegians and Germans.

We could have put up with their dirty habits and still dirtier selves, but when meal-time came and these people started to cook at both ends of the carriage, it was more than we could bear.

Even O'Leary, philosopher and stoic as we had proved him to be, groaned at the prospects of the journey.

We had brought a civilised assortment of food which needed no cooking. It was very lucky we did so, as there were only two stoves for about forty people, and each had to take his turn in a queue before he could play at "stinks." Imagine the smell of about twenty different foods!

In this travelling menagerie we were destined to spend two or three days.

The family in the opposite seats did not improve our appetites, but certainly fascinated us by their skill in manipu-



lating spaghetti. It was extraordinary to watch the gymnastic prowess required for an extra long strand. They fed their kids in much the same way as a sparrow feeds her family, except that perhaps the baby sparrow eats the worm in a cleaner way than the Dago child eats spaghetti.

In the evening a nigger came and arranged the seats into bunks by letting down the sides of the carriage immediately overhead, which form a second tier.

Thank goodness I was able to share my bunk with O'Leary, otherwise it is difficult to think what fate might have been mine.

Never shall I forget the discomforts of that night. The train crawled along with frequent stops. The air was foul with the smell of cooking and dirty people. There was practically no ventilation, it being impossible to open the windows when the bunks were down.

It was the steerage all over again, but on a smaller scale. Now and then there would be an awful commotion when somebody made a mistake and tried to get into the wrong bunk.

One woman actually climbed into our bunk before she realised the fact that neither of us belonged to her. However, she was not long in discovering her mistake, for O'Leary sat up and called her a "spalpeen," and gently but firmly pushed her out.

She scrambled away, squealing like a shot rabbit. It was so comic that we shrieked with laughter. This disturbance brought the nigger porter, who increased our mirth by saying: "Say, boss, this ain't no place of en'tainment; you gotter keep quiet as dem good folks."

"Dem good folks," as he termed them, were kicking up an appalling din. These black fellows seem to have as queer a sense of proportion as they have of colour . . . and yet they most certainly have both.

The next morning we were up early, so as to be able to wash before the crowd started their culinary contortions.

Our ablutions not having been long finished, the old nigger attendant re-appeared, turned everyone out, and re-arranged the bunks as before.

The country through which we passed was far too flat to be interesting, and I knew too little about farming to comprehend that it really *was* interesting, and to some most instructive.

Now and again we would stop at a small wooden station, where we would buy oranges and chocolate. The hawkers of these refreshments seemed to do a fine trade, and they live principally on what they make from the emigrant trains.

Our most interesting stop was at a place

called Port Arthur, which is situated on the north-west corner of Lake Superior.

This lake is more like an inland sea, and was the centre, we were told, of very bad and dangerous storms which often occur over it. There is a great deal of shipping done, the boats being built especially strong and dually controlled to meet all emergencies.

It was at Port Arthur that I had my first taste of a true Canadian.

We had been strolling up and down the platform with O'Leary, when I accidentally bumped into a man leaning up against a post and chewing a cigar. I immediately apologised in my most pleasant manner. Instead of receiving some courteous remark such as "Not at all," or "That's all right," or even saying nothing at all, he turned upon me, and said very curtly, and with a most terrible twang: "Say, Britisher, just cut that sorry stuff out, it don't cut no ice here. I guess we've got no time for it." I was so taken aback, my feelings were so hurt, that I was completely tongue-tied. O'Leary pulled me away in case I should take it into my head to retort, in which case there would very probably have been a row.

When we got to some distance he burst into roars of laughter at my discomfiture, but for the minute I was far too annoyed

to see the joke; however, later I did see the humour of it, and vowed that I should never apologise again on Canadian soil.

#### VI.—We reach Wollaboo.

At length, having travelled about 2,200 miles, we reached Wollaboo on the evening of the third day.

It was with the greatest relief imaginable that we left that train.

We put up at a small hotel in Portage Avenue. Like most of the smaller Canadian hotels, it was a cheerless place, with far more spittoons than furniture. I hated this habit of chronic expectoration, which is the outcome of chewing bad cigars.

It took me some time before I learnt to use the aforesaid articles of "bigotry and virtue" with any degree of accuracy.

The next morning we thoroughly inspected the town which was destined to harbour us for several weeks.

Wollaboo possesses only two thoroughfares of any real importance—Portage Avenue and Main Street, commonly called Portage and Main. These streets correspond to our Piccadilly, or rather Regent Street and Bond Street. They are far finer and wider, which is not altogether an advantage, for when it is cold, and it can be very cold in Wollaboo, they are the

draughtiest and chilliest streets in the world.

Similarly to Montreal, there are a few handsome buildings, but being a younger town, it can't boast of parks and universities.

It is essentially a Western town which has only sprung up in the last few years. It wasn't until they discovered their water-power, which is some distance away, that they started building in stone.

Many of the inhabitants can remember the time when this town merely consisted of a row of wooden houses, and with nothing you could call a road; the pavements were rudely fashioned from rough boardings. (This is very common in British Columbia to this day.)

To-day all is changed, and Wollaboo has become the most important grain centre in Canada; it is growing rapidly, and undoubtedly possesses a boundless future.

The following day we made it our business to search for cheap lodgings, and without much difficulty found what we required in Fort Garry Street.

The rooms weren't up to much, but as our funds were very low, we had to be content.

Having nearly come to the end of mine, I had to satisfy myself with a garret of a room, barely large enough to swing the proverbial cat.

However, a bed is a bed, and with a book of meal-tickets I had very little to grumble at.

By eking out the tickets (which the landlady clipped like a 'bus-ticket after each meal) I could last a week out of work.

My meals consisted of a plate of porridge and an egg at eight o'clock in the morning; a pumpkin pie and a small plate of meat at eight in the evening. This fare was not warranted to make one fat. O'Leary often shared his mid-day meal with me, Hopson being far too fond of his stomach to do likewise, nor do I blame him; we had to look after ourselves.

That evening O'Leary and I studied the advertisements, and found in them but little comfort. Wollaboo was in the throes of a slump.

I began to have serious qualms concerning our future. To be in a town thousands of miles from home, with no profession, and little in one's pocket, is no joke, and gives one furiously to think.

O'Leary advised me to pay a visit to my friend the ex-mayor, whom we had entirely forgotten.

On arriving at his office, I was told that he was still away and not expected back for a month. This was very discouraging, as we had expected him to find us a job.

His secretary was not at all amiably dis-

posed; in fact, he thought me an insufferable nuisance.

I told him with some pride that I was a 'Varsity man, but if I thought this was going to have a good effect I was very much mistaken. The gentleman did not take at all kindly to this piece of information; in fact, he very frankly gave me to understand that he thoroughly disliked all Englishmen, and especially 'Varsity men. He was so discourteous as to tell me—in very plain Canadian—that we were "A God-damn trouble, and pickers not worth a two-cent pie," whatever that meant.

I apologised for being an Englishman, excused myself for being a 'Varsity man, and humbly asked him whether these drawbacks were any reason why I should starve.

To this he replied that "Most Englishmen, when first in Canada, had to starve before getting a job." Nice cheerful optimist!

Hating him and all his breed, I left him extremely discomforted by the way he had talked about my countrymen, and fully realising, in the short time I had been in Canada, that to be an Englishman was distinctly a disadvantage. It would have been far better had I been a Scotsman or an Irishman, or even Chink—anything but an Englishman.

O'Leary was most sympathetic and anxious on hearing my news. The only thing left to do was to answer or apply to the first likely, "Ad." which we might come across.

**VII.—We try Plumbing Work and find we are not "Live Wires."**

We spent an hour studying the papers, and found a few and varied posts vacant. There seemed to be a great demand for "drummers," which is the Canadian term for commercial travellers, but we both agreed that we should only apply for this job as a last resource. We mutually felt that we didn't know a sufficient number of naughty stories to qualify, nor had we the necessary nerve and self-assurance.

After much argument we decided to try our luck as plumbers, or rather, at the laying down of bathroom floors. O'Leary had had some previous experience of mixing mortar, and I had done some painting in Italy, and thought I could very well manage the coloured tiles and the arranging of the patterns.

We therefore came to the conclusion that the laying down of bathroom floors was the only thing we could venture on with any hope of success.

The advertisement stated that "two live



"wires" were wanted, and that no others could apply for the job. We were both at a loss as to the meaning of the expression, but certainly agreed that if we failed to get any employment we should speedily become "two live wires" from want of food.

I was distinctly nervous at the prospects of this venture, as it was not a bit of good deluding ourselves with the idea that we had the slightest knowledge of the job, but, "*faute de mieux*," we resolved to try our luck, even if we had to resort to a little prevarication.

Thus, armed only with courage, we presented ourselves to the firm of builders who were so badly in need of skilled labour and "real live wires."

The foreman, or whoever he was, received us curtly (this no longer surprised us; we were getting used to it), and asked if we had had any previous experience of floor laying. We unblushingly replied that we had done nothing else in England for the past five years.

I didn't like the idea of telling such blatant lies, as I felt sure we should be discovered as impostors sooner or later. However, 35 cents an hour was not to be sneezed at, and if we could only have the luck of escaping detection for a week or two, it would certainly chase the wolf from the door.

We seemed to satisfy the foreman, who no doubt felt (I flatter myself) quite pleased at the idea of getting real good British labour. In any case, whether this was so or not, we got the job, and were told to start at once.

The first thing we did was to buy blue overalls; no workman in Canada works without them. Having procured these very necessary garments, we were directed to a new block of flats which were nearing completion.

We were told that we had at least twenty bathroom floors to lay, and that if we gave satisfaction there was enough work to last two or three months.

I had my very serious doubts as to our being able to last as much as a week, but O'Leary, with his usual optimism, felt sure that we should make our fortunes in bathrooms, and that presently we should be able to "float" a limited company (or a bath) and start on our own. I allowed him to keep this opinion unchallenged, but already felt the toe of a Canadian boot in a somewhat tender part of my anatomy.

We found all the material ready for us, and without wasting time O'Leary set to work. I carried the sand, &c., to him, and he did the mixing.

As soon as we had mixed sufficient, we carried it in pails to the bathroom. This

was no sinecure, as the mortar was extremely heavy, and we had to use a great deal of it.

My heart jumped to my mouth when I first caught sight of the kind of work we were to do. How to start and where to start? There were several hundred tiles waiting for me in a corner.

O'Leary seemed to be revelling in his work. He was splashing about and, as far as I could see, making an awful mess. However, as soon as he had put sufficient mortar on to the floor, I placed the tiles in the most artistic way I could devise. Sometimes the tiles wouldn't fit, which meant breaking bits off—this being the most difficult part of the business.

Whether it was that we had convinced the foreman that we were experienced workmen, or whether it was that he was too busy elsewhere, I don't know, but he left us severely alone for about a fortnight. We had made about thirty dollars and completed three bathroom floors. We were very proud of ourselves. On a Monday morning, about ten o'clock, the foreman made his appearance. Never shall I forget the pride with which O'Leary showed our work.

The foreman, to our intense relief, seemed quite satisfied, but our mutual satisfaction was short-lived, for, as he was

about to depart, he suddenly turned round on us in a blazing fury. "You G—— d—— pickers, you've forgotten the holes for the pipes!"

O'Leary and I looked at one another with dismay and consternation. It was the one thing we *had* entirely overlooked. We could have kicked ourselves for being such idiots as not to have realised that there are such things as pipes in a bathroom.

I never have seen a man in such a fury, and hope I never may again.

We had to spend three days in pulling half of the wretched floor up.

The mess we made ruined the good work we had so prided ourselves upon.

Very naturally we were fired, and somewhat forcibly too.

We discovered ourselves on the pavement surrounded by an unpleasant crowd of fellow-workers, who seemed to take no end of satisfaction in our discomfiture.

Thus ended our first and last attempt at laying down bathroom floors.

However, we could not grumble at our fate, for we had made a few dollars where we didn't deserve it.

The most unfortunate part of the affair was that we were again in the position of having to look for work.

Hopson, in the meantime and unbe-

known to us, had been far more fortunate. He had rented a garage with the little money he had, and was doing quite well.

He was not at all sympathetic on hearing our experience, but laughed most heartily, and thought it a great joke.

However, I was able to have a mid-day meal for two or three days, and as it was through honest, if not successful labour, I was extremely proud of myself.

#### VIII.—I turn Packer for the Hudson Bay Company and come a Cropper.

Again we had to resort to the newspapers, and this time we left plumbing and bathroom floors severely alone.

Hopson, who never really liked me, suggested to O'Leary that he should join him in the garage and invest in a second-hand Ford car.

I persuaded O'Leary to do this, knowing that the loyal Irishman would not leave me, and pointed out that he had first to think of himself, while I could always find something which would enable me to keep going.

He therefore accepted Hopson's proposition, and promised to help me if they did well over it.

It grieved me to lose his companionship during the day, but after all it was far better for me to fend for myself.

I discovered that the Hudson Bay Company were in want of packers, but only for such time as there was any packing to do. O'Leary advised me to apply for the job, and at the same time look out for something permanent.

I was lucky to be taken on as an extra hand at the warehouse, and was told to start at once.

I found myself in a long building with a stone floor filled with masses of cases piled one on top of the other. One side of the warehouse gave on to the railway line for loading the freight trains.

My foreman was a crusty old chap who had once, no doubt, been young, but who now looked like the miser in the "Cloches de Corneville." He wasn't really bad-hearted, but having been a hundred years or so in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company, packing biscuits and other foods from morn till eve, he had grown rather stale.

He greeted me gruffly but not unkindly, and asked me what I could do. I told him I could do anything, and, no doubt if I stayed in Canada any length of time, any *body*.

He didn't possess a thread of humour; considering the poor old fellow's intimate relations with dry biscuits, one could not expect anything else.

He presented me with a hammer and nails and yards of hooping, which I was to nail round the edges of about a hundred cases of biscuits. When finished, these were to be stacked one on top of the other in rows of tens.

For the first hour I effectually knocked my thumb out of shape and added a few choice words to my vocabulary.

Every time I yelled the old sinner would indulge in a croak; he never laughed, which irritated me beyond words.

Really, it was a very painful proceeding, and at the same time I soon developed blisters as large as cocoanuts.

It was the most monotonous job knocking nails into cases for hour after hour.

At one o'clock the whistle blew, and we all stopped work, and went outside and sat on the side of the road and ate our lunches.

Most of them kept the food wrapped up in a handkerchief. This I had not yet learnt to do, and never did it occur to me that I should ever copy the workmen so often seen in England. I smiled at the thought of my 'Varsity pals having tea in front of a cosy fire, the distant echo of the chapel organ, the care-free cries of the "wet-bobs" returning from "toggers." Here was I a mere labourer,

munching bread and cheese with a bit of newspaper as a plate. Well, well!

"*Sus quisque fortunæ faber.*"

The two o'clock whistle rudely wakened me from my dreams of the past, and pushed me with a bump into the very hard and material present.

Back to those infernal biscuits, hoop iron and hammer! The Hudson Bay Company had always spelt romance to me; I never expected it to be so abruptly shattered.

We used to start at seven o'clock in the morning and wait on the roadside until the senior worker led the way; then we would all troop like sheep into the warehouse, and punch a machine which registered the time at which we commenced work. On Saturdays the foreman would give you an envelope with your week's pay.

After two or three days my hands got so painful that I was afraid that I should have to stop and get them seen to, but the old scarecrow told me to stick to it and allow them to get hard. Poor old O'Leary was awfully concerned on my showing them to him in the evenings.

For quite a long time I could not accustom myself to going about in dirty over-



alls, feeling particularly sensitive when ladies edged away from me in the trolly cars (Canadian for tramcars). Possibly I wasn't too clean, and had often done this myself when in the trams at home. However, it didn't take me long to get used to it.

It is quite extraordinary what a great part habit takes in one's life. After a time one can get accustomed to almost anything.

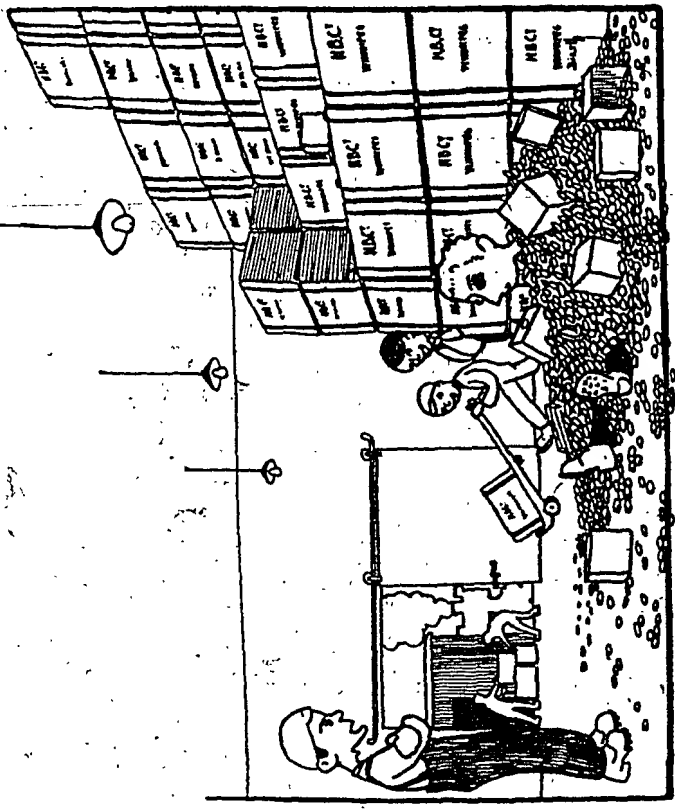
In the afternoon, after having done a score or two of biscuit-boxes in the morning, we used to load the freight trains.

This was great fun, and not so painful as constant hammering.

I got to like the old foreman, who in his rough way was very kind to me. He would ask me all sorts of questions concerning the "Old Country," and brightened up very considerably when I mentioned Leicester Square and Piccadilly Circus.

One afternoon a fearful misfortune befell me. I was packing biscuit-boxes in series of tens ready for the next freight train and finding it very difficult to hoist the boxes, which were quite heavy, when on the tenth row I missed my shot. With a most fearful clatter and a yell from me, which brought the foreman and half the

WITH A MOST FEARFUL CLATTER ABOUT TWENTY BOXES FELL,  
BURYING ME UNDER THEIR CONTENTS.



people in the establishment to my side, about twenty boxes fell, scattering the biscuits to the four winds of heaven and completely burying me. "Oh, hell!" said the Princess, nibbling at a 'petit beurre.' "Poor old Shylock was speechless with rage—such a thing, he said, had never happened in all his vast experience of biscuits. I was a "mutt," a "siwash," and sundry other things in terms of flattery which I can no longer remember. It's all very well cursing a poor unfortunate who is entirely surrounded by biscuits, and who is more or less crumbling under the weight of them.

The old boy never forgave me this episode, nor did he see the humour of my having to crawl from out those biscuits, like a rabbit from its warren.

That very evening I was told that there was no longer enough work, and under those circumstances my services were no longer needed.

Again I was out of work; again I had put my foot straight into the consommé, or rather the biscuits.

Was I destined to be a failure at everything I tried? What had my mother been thinking about to bring a useless bit of junk like me into the world?

There was precious little difference between mental and manual labour with me.

IX.—I act as Gardener to a Sweet Lady—but  
still "get the Sack."

It was the most dejected person in the world who said good-evening to O'Leary a little later.

He slapped me on the back and proposed we should go and have a drink. This cheered me up, as I hadn't been able to afford the luxury of a drink for some time.

A Canadian bar is quite an experience. Most of them are very long and usually very crowded.

One does not ask for a whisky-and-soda. Just whisky, and you get the bottle and help yourself. It makes no difference to the price what amount you take. After the whisky you take a draught of water.

It is quite usual for a man to ask whether you will have a drink or a cigar, or if he asks you whether you want a drink you may ask him for a cigar. My advice is to have a drink.

Feeling a good deal comforted after a few drinks, I resolved not to allow myself to be beaten.

O'Leary told me he had seen an advertisement for a gardener, and if I looked slippery the job might be mine.

I did look slippery, and must have looked a slippery customer, too, for I did not seem to impress the very charming lady-

owner of the garden with my abilities as a gardener.

She was an extremely affable person, and I was most keen to get the job, and vowed that if she sat on the lawn I'd do nothing but mow that lawn.

She asked me if I knew anything about roses. I said that I knew of an excellent way of killing green flies (having seen my father blow tobacco-smoke on rose trees at home).

She seemed quite pleased. She then asked if I knew anything about birds. I felt she was asking me a very personal question, and replied that I did know something about "birds," but probably not the ones she meant.

However, we got on quite nicely together, and had a long and interesting conversation. I asked her if she played bridge, which seemed to surprise her a good deal.

She engaged me, but I am perfectly certain it had nothing to do with my gardening.

I found the easiest thing to do was to start off with a little weeding, and was quite sure that any fool could weed without being found out.

I weeded for a whole day until my back ached. My mistress seemed to think it was wasting time, and said that there

were many other more useful things one could do. She called me John. She told me that her last gardener, a very good man, who had just died, was called John.

I asked her to call me Lofty, as I preferred that to John; she said she rather liked the name of Lofty.

As my weeding did not seem to be very successful, I thought it best to try my hand with the roses, and I went out and bought some cigarettes so as to be able to kill green-fly.

After having smoked about ten cigarettes, my mistress paid me another of her welcome visits.

She asked me if I spent the whole of my days smoking, and whether or not I intended to do any work. I was much hurt, and answered with great dignity that this was the way one killed green-fly in England. She replied that she had never heard of it being so, which was somewhat disconcerting, so I discontinued my insect-killing arrangements, and thought a little watering would be within my gardening capabilities. Unfortunately this was not too successful, for the hose-pipe burst, and I received a cold shower, and very nearly drowned the housemaid, who was in the act of beating carpets.

My pretty mistress paid me another visit the following morning, and found me

busily engaged planting geraniums. She was very sweet and kind to me, but thought me a very inexperienced gardener, and hoped I wouldn't mind leaving at the end of the week.

I was very sorry and told her so, and owned up to the fact that I had never done any gardening in my life.

She was kind enough to offer to help me to get a new job, but advised me to go in for window cleaning or road-mending. I most humbly thanked her for her good advice, and saw her once again on the day I was leaving, when she handed me my week's pay, and wished me all the luck in the world. I very nearly kissed her; she was certainly the prettiest and sweetest little woman I had yet met.

#### X.—I interview the Mayor of Wollaboo.

I had already been in Wollaboo a month, and so far had done nothing which was likely to set the St. Lawrence on fire.

My dreams of being able to get to the Yukon seemed to be a mere romanticism and not likely to become an accomplished fact.

Whenever I mentioned the Yukon to O'Leary, he simply laughed and told me to stay where I was; otherwise it would be jumping from the frying-pan into the fire. Wollaboo was bitterly cold and not a bit

like a frying-pan; the Yukon, it was said, was colder still.

It was no pleasure to me to be "fired," but it seemed to have developed into a habit, and like most habits, especially bad ones, very difficult to overcome.

I resolved to pay the ex-mayor another visit, and this time found him in his lair, his ungainly figure recumbent in a huge chair which must have been specially made for him.

I discovered he was not half as pleasant in his domain as on the boat. He acted and spoke like a veritable tin god.

His staff seemed to live in mortal dread of him. The secretary bowed and scraped and fussed about him in a most sickening manner. I could scarcely refrain from smiling somewhat ironically, which annoyed the gentleman intensely.

He greeted me with his usual "gleaming" smile, and asked me to take a chair. I hadn't noticed one worth taking, but this is the Canadian way of asking one to sit down.

He selected one of his horrible cigars and offered me one, but I refused. He then arranged a spittoon each side of him in much the same way as a woman arranges pretty cushions on a divan, and proceeded to divide his expectorations with equal accuracy between them.



I thought him the most repulsive person I had ever seen in my life, and wondered how on earth he managed to have such a pretty daughter.

For at least ten minutes he continued spitting and reading his correspondence without taking the slightest notice of me, notwithstanding the fact that I coughed discreetly on two or three occasions.

At last, having missed the spittoon on the off-side for the first time, which undoubtedly disturbed his trend of thought, he condescended to remember that I was sitting on one of his hard seats with the patience of Job.

"Wall, and how do you find Wollaboo?" I felt like telling him, but thought better of it, and merely replied that with money and work it might be very pleasant.

"I guess you've found there's quite a slump in these parts and work very difficult to get." I said that I had noticed rather a shortage, and reminded him that it was through his advice that I had come to Wollaboo.

"I guess you're looking for some journalistic work; that's also very difficult to obtain without previous training."

Why on earth this monument of gold had not told me that on the boat instead of now, I couldn't think. Of course I realised these things and told him so.

"Wall, say, boy, looker here, I'll write a line to my friend, Colonel Patchem of the *Liewell Telegram*; perhaps he will be able to find something for you to do." "Perhaps" sounded very encouraging, and if the friend was anything like the mayor, there was no reason why I shouldn't be wildly optimistic.

He wrote me a letter of introduction, which he dictated to my amiable friend the secretary, who smiled sarcastically the whole time he was doing it, making me itch to kick the worm.

The mighty mayor handed me the letter with a great flourish, as though he was doing me an immense act of kindness; told me that I was very lucky indeed to have such an influential introduction, and hoped that he would have the pleasure of reading some of my "stuff." I really believe the old hypocrite was trying to be funny. He added that a "cub's" life was a very entertaining one. I wondered if he referred to the "unlicked," but discovered this to be another Canadian expression, which means a novice in journalism, or junior reporter.

I thanked him for his kindness with as much warmth as I could muster, though feeling that I could willingly have bashed him on the head and robbed him of his golden masticators.

The secretary ushered me out of his office, and gave me a parting shot by advising me to try and make my fortune with "penny dreadfuls." I thanked him most courteously, and told him I probably would be writing about him. Cheap wit, but it annoyed him.

XI.—The Editor of the "Liewell Telegram" did not require my Services.

I went straight to the *Telegram* offices, although feeling sure that I should meet with very little success.

I found everyone as rude as he could be. The colonel was busy, or "He hasn't time to see anybody; what do you want? A job?" and so on. Just what I had expected.

However, I wasn't going to be put off quite so easily. I was going to show these darned Canadians that an Englishman was just as persevering and dogged as they prided themselves on being.

I hung about the corridors until I saw a very nice and kindly-looking girl, who seemed to take compassion on me, and promised to see what she could do for me.

She came back presently, and told me that Colonel Patchem would see me in a few minutes.

Those few minutes happened to mean

two hours and a quarter; as bad as trying to get an interview at the War Office.

At last the door opened, and a short, bad-tempered-looking man shouted to me to come in.

I disliked the gentleman from the moment I set eyes on him. A bully from top to toe.

"Just been reading a letter about you from my friend the mayor. He says you write descriptive articles. Got no use for 'em in our paper. Don't go in for that sort of junk. Want short, snappy articles—murders, divorces—entertaining things like that. Who cares a damn about sunsets and starry nights in Florence? Got no time for them. Good-morning."

I was ushered out again, having waited two hours for an interview which lasted five seconds, which was very lucid and to the point. They don't waste much time, these Canadians.

I walked out of the office with the feeling that I had just had an icy-cold plunge. A drink was the only thing which would keep me from lynching the paper boy who had the darned cheek to offer me a *Liewell Telegram*.

In five fateful seconds my journalistic hopes had been dashed from a dizzy height.

Without a doubt the 'Varsity had only

qualified me to work with my hands or my elbow. My head was as useful to me as a moral certificate to a demi-mondaine.

What to do for a living was a question which needed a great deal of answering.

O'Leary was furious on hearing my news, and called the mayor a "shpalpeen" and a host of other Republican words.

I was quite at a loss to know where to turn for work. There didn't seem to be any to be had in the whole of Wollaboo.

## XII.—The Landlady to the Rescue—and I turn Butler.

At dinner-time our landlady, a very dear little woman, rushed up to our table in a very great state of excitement.

"Say, Mr. Lofty, I guess I've gotten on a job that will just suit you. A dandy good job. Good money and clothes supplied. What do you think it is?"

None of us could guess. It couldn't be as coachman to the Lord Mayor; there wasn't one, and the present man drove about in a Ford car. We gave it up.

"A butler!" she almost whispered. I thought she was at least going to say the private secretary to the Governor-General.

O'Leary and Hopson burst into a peal of laughter which quite upset our worthy landlady.

"It's a very good job, and Mr. Lofty should be tickled to death at the chance."

Mr. Lofty was "tickled to death." A butler of all things—an alcoholic retainer—it was enough to make the cat laugh.

"James, will you pass the wine, except to Mrs. So-and-So. James, I am not at home, except to Mr. Rightone." Really, it was too funny for words. I could almost imagine myself sampling my master's best port, and I am a fairly good judge too, so my friends used to tell me at the 'Varsity.

Observing that our merriment was hurting the good lady's susceptibilities, I thanked her with a great show of gratitude, and assured her that I was cut out for the position.

This pleased her, for she was extremely eager for me to accept this post.

O'Leary thought I should make a good butler, and advised me to have a try. The experience, in any case, would be a humorous one.

It was therefore agreed that the landlady should make an appointment.

Consequently the next day I presented myself to Mrs. C—— in Riverside Drive.

The house was really quite nice and most lavishly furnished; there was no taste displayed, and the furniture was blatantly modern, but it spelt dollars.

Mrs. C—— was a fat and not unpleasant woman who might quite easily have started her career as a cook in some respectable family.

I think she was rather surprised to find one so young presenting himself as an experienced butler.

My short sojourn in Canada had dispelled any idea of "the truth, and nothing but the truth."

It's not a bit of good telling Canadians that you know nothing about a job you are trying to get; for they believe you, and you're minus the job. On the other hand, if you tell them you know all about it and that you have a vast experience, they'll take your word for it.

This is what they call shooting the bull, and no one thinks any the worse of you for shooting it.

Here was a good occasion, then, to do a little bull stalking.

Mrs. C—— asked me if I had any experience of butlering, and if I had any references. I replied, not untruthfully, that I had been in a house with a butler for some years, who had taught me sufficient for me to start on my own.

She said she liked my looks and would give me a trial.

I was to look after the wines (I had already tasted the port), silver, and the

master's clothes (badly needing some myself). I was to start the following day, with permission to live out. This arrangement suited me admirably, as I could still have O'Leary's companionship.

She would supply me with clothes which had been worn by her former butler, and I would receive ten dollars a week.

This was indeed a stroke of good fortune which would enable me to save for a rainy day.

I returned to my lodgings in high spirits, and my landlady was delighted.

O'Leary would insist in calling me James, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. C—— was to call me John. Was it owing to my good testimonials that I was to be called "John the Butler?"

The next day I commenced my duties and felt very dignified in my black tail-coat and striped trousers, which did not fit me so badly, except that the trousers were rather on the large size round the waist.

It was an agreeable surprise to find that the parlourmaid was an extremely pretty girl, but the cook was as ugly as sin and a perfect "Maenad." The rest of the staff were very ordinary.

The house was run on English lines. To be the only manservant in the place,



made me somewhat nervous as to the future. I felt much like a drake in a hen-run, and didn't stand as much chance.

I almost felt that I should end up by marrying the parlourmaid, murdering the cook, or be poisoned through revengeful jealousy by the kitchenmaid.

My first morning "in service" was not devoid of incidents. At about eleven o'clock my mistress rang for me and requested me to take her Pom, who rejoiced in the name of "Punky," out for a walk. I never imagined part of my duties would consist in perambulating a woman's lap-dog. I was thankful she had no children, or I might have had to wheel the pram.

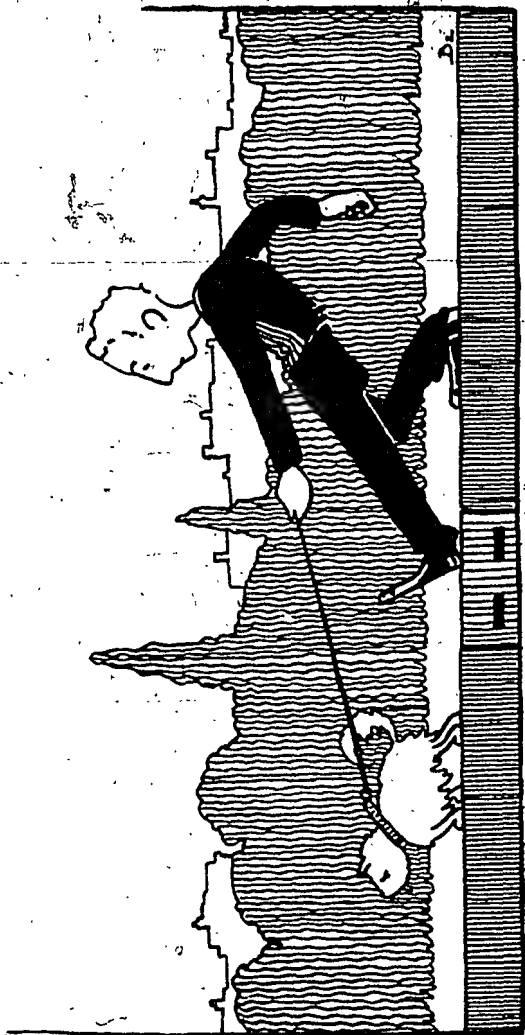
The Pom, like most dogs of that breed, was a confounded nuisance. It had to be on a lead, and the little brute would try and walk in the opposite direction.

This unfortunate and wayward habit, on one or two occasions, nearly brought my face in close proximity to mother-earth.

It wasn't until I thoroughly lost all patience and kicked him that he condescended to go the same way home.

I cheerfully could have lost "Punky" had it not been for fear of losing my situation.

At twelve o'clock I had another distasteful job to perform: the parrot's cage had to be cleaned.



PERAMBULATING A WOMAN'S LAP DOG.

Hateful are the women who keep parrots and Poms.

The parrot took a passionate liking to my nose, which isn't a small one, and caused me mortal dread of having it nipped off.

It was a relief to hear that Mrs. C—— would be out to lunch, but I took "stage fright" when told there would be ten for dinner.

Ten for dinner—ten mouths to feed—ten glasses to fill ten times—ten things to do and to remember, and goodness knows how many things to drop!

This was a terrific ordeal for my first day as a butler.

I sat and pondered in the servants' hall over the different little mannerisms of our old retainer at home. Did one serve from the left? Who was to be served first? and a score of similar knotty problems.

I started laying my table at five, and was helped by the pretty parlourmaid, and was quite successful in covering the table and my ignorance.

Nothing could be obtained by funk; nothing for it but a bold front, behave with exaggerated dignity, and bear myself as pompously as a major-domo in the "Royal Household."

I felt sure that these antics would impress the Canadians; nor was I disappointed.

At half-past seven the front door bell pealed—at that precise moment I was “peeling” grape fruit. This, I subsequently learnt, is not the thing to do in the New World.

Dropping the fruit in trepidation, I advanced with steps majestic and slow. I had learnt to do the slow march in my school Cadet Corps, my arms well curbed as in the first movement in the “Turkey Trot,” my chest puffed out to the straining limit of my waistcoat buttons, having noticed these points in an old copy of Thackeray.

### XIII.—My first dinner as Butler—and how I earned Five Dollars.

I relieved the gentleman of his coat with great flourish, but half spoiled the effect by dropping his hat.

I suggested that if his wife wished to powder her face or wash her hands I would help her, but quickly corrected myself and said the housemaid would.

I felt I had not said quite the right thing, but covered my confusion by suggesting that a drink and a cigarette would not be a bad scheme, as he might have some time to wait.

The Canadian was distinctly amused at my suggestion, but pointed out, much to

my embarrassment, that it wasn't his wife.

To this information I replied that I was sorry. He replied that he wasn't. They are very familiar with domestics in this country.

When I had collected his little friend, who had completely lost herself in the basement, I marshalled them with quiet and deliberate dignity to the drawing-room, flung the doors open in a truly Drury Lane manner, and in sonorous tones announced: "Mr. Verry Hungry and Miss Also Hungry."

I believe these good people were impressed, for they paused a moment and a great silence reigned. My first efforts seemed completely successful.

Mrs. C——, it was evident, was extremely proud of the impression her dignified butler had made.

The parlourmaid was equally awed, for she said with some feeling: "Say, ain't you grand! Were you with a duchess?"

I said something about "m'lady being always particular," which made the parlourmaid most attentive and careful for the remainder of the evening.

Having performed the same evolutions with the remaining guests with equal gusto and magnificence, I heaved open the doors, and in Martin Harvey's most

approved style announced: "Dinner is served, m'lady."

This created quite a stir and not a little bad feeling amongst the ladies. My mistress did not contradict my mistake, so I assumed I had found a cleft in her armour.

I stood, slightly bent (à la early Victorian style), behind my mistress's chair, and waited until the company had ceased to wrangle as to where, and next to whom, they should sit.

As soon as the last creak of the shuffling chairs had ceased I started to balance the soup. So far, so good. I then proceeded, as per rules and regulations, to serve the sherry, my mistress beaming with satisfaction and chortling with snobbishness.

I carefully chose small glasses for the ladies, but took good care to give the men "doubles."

I had always heard that the success of a dinner largely depended upon the glasses being well filled, the gentlemen having as much as they would hold. At least this was the 'Varsity idea, and our motto was: "A little too much is just enough."

I soon discovered that I had opened two bottles of sherry and that Mrs. C—— was becoming a trifle restless and anxious. I rather hoped she would say what my mother would have said on such occasions —B.H.B.—which is to be interpreted,

"Butler hold back," but this good lady had not my mother's resourcefulness.

However, the entry of the fish kept me very busy. The dish was so hot that I very nearly turned one poor lady's frock into a "*smack*."

At this juncture the wit of the party took it upon himself to try and entertain the table with funny stories.

Every now and again he would look at me to see if he could possibly disturb my sphinx-like attitude. Unfortunately the stories were the most awful chestnuts, and I felt more like saying "Shut up," but, realising my position as a hireling, refrained. It is to be admitted his stories went down very well considering their antiquity, but I suppose to these people they were new. It takes time for a story to travel to some places.

At one moment the poor chap had got into terrible difficulties; he had quite forgotten how to finish his story. It happened to be the story of the man trying to persuade St. Peter to let him into Heaven. I took compassion on his embarrassment, and leaning over to replenish his glass, whispered: "Give him twopence and send him to hell." He was so surprised and so pleased with this sudden coaching from such an unexpected quarter, that the next

time I came round he slipped a five-dollar bill into my hand.

I sincerely hoped he would forget a few more, but evidently I must have cramped his style, for he gave up and relapsed into a moody silence; his eyes followed me round the room for the rest of the meal.

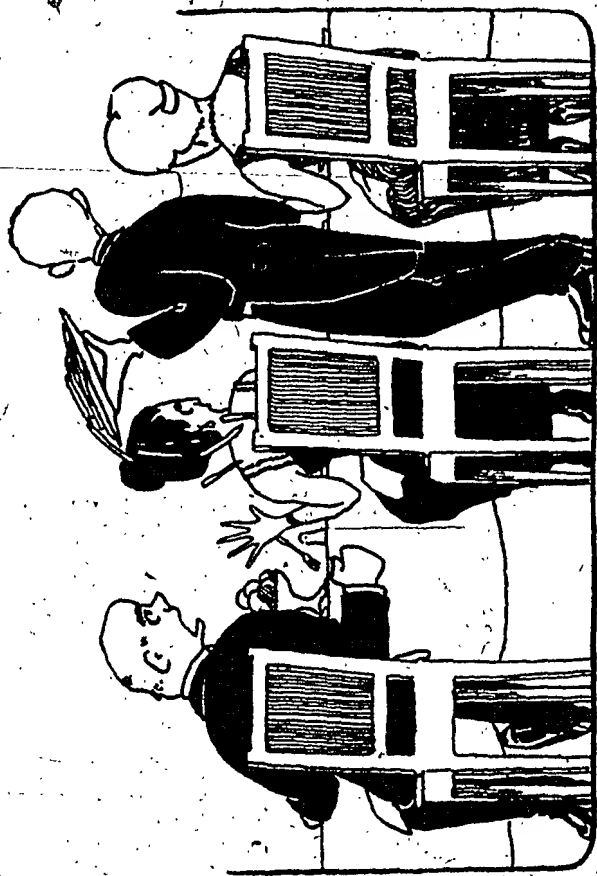
I was as liberal with the champagne as with the sherry, and the guests were beginning to feel the effects. My mistress seemed to hold her own, for which I was not sorry, for I felt sure that she would not be so likely to notice any mistake I might make.

Meanwhile I had plenty of opportunities to sample the wine before pouring it out, and found it remarkably good.

The first tragedy occurred when I dropped some asparagus down a lady's neck. I could hardly be blamed for this little "*lapsus asparagi*," for the good lady would use her hands when excited. Had she been temperate, I am quite certain that this unfortunate business would never have happened.

Still, she was quite nice about it, and said it was a pity that the stalks were so long. I replied in very aggrieved tones that in m'lady's house, back in England, we always manicured them before bringing them to the table. She was very much struck with this piece of intelligence, and





"LAPSUS ASPARAGI."

looked upon me with great interest for the remainder of the evening.

I felt that I had created a great impression during the dinner, and quite expected to be asked to sit down and take coffee with them.

My relief was very great when the meal was over. It had been an ordeal, but considering it was my first dinner-party, I had not done so badly.

My reception in the servants' hall was touching. The little parlourmaid had collected the dregs from the champagne glasses and offered them to me. She was almost weeping with emotion, and I hadn't the heart to refuse her. Why all this fuss, I don't know.

The kitchenmaid eyed us sullenly and said something about my being a suspicious character, and called me the "Parlourmaid's Ruin."

The next morning my mistress was good enough to tell me that the dinner had gone very well and that she was very pleased.

My master must have had rather a head, for I had the greatest difficulty in waking him. For reasons best known to my mistress, he was sleeping in the spare room—this is usually a bad sign.

After I had coughed discreetly, rattled the tea-cups, and slipped the blind with a clatter, his "lordship" condescended to

blink and accustom himself to the light of day.

Catching sight of me must have given him a most unpleasant recollection of the night before.

I said "Good-morning, sir," most cheerfully, and asked him if he fancied bacon and eggs for breakfast or a little Vichy.

"Say, you hobo, you're the gink that stretched me full of wine last night."

I merely answered "Yes<sup>s</sup> sir."

My frank answer seemed to amuse him, for he smiled a rather sickly smile and dropped the conversation.

If there was one thing in the world I hated, it was brushing and pressing clothes. To me it is even a more menial occupation than waiting at table.

I should have much preferred to be my mistress's lady's maid.

XIV.—I am called a Flirt by the pretty Parlour-maid and get "the Bird" again.

About two days later an extremely nice young woman called and took tea. I think she must have been a relative, as she had no respect for the furniture and sneaked fruit from the dresser.

She seemed surprised to see me, and asked me if I was the new man.

I replied somewhat haughtily that I was the new butler.

She smiled very nicely, and asked me if I was a married man.

I answered very cautiously that I wasn't sure, but that no doubt time would show.

She seemed rather puzzled, and said she didn't think I could have been a butler all my life. I replied that I had waited a long time to become one.

She smiled very charmingly, and said that I was a very good one.

I answered "Thank you, miss." Stock phrase in a butler's vocabulary. It either means nothing or signifies the usual formula for gratitude in respect of monetary donations.

As I was about to retire she said she hoped I would remain with her aunt for some time.

I answered "Thank you, miss," but realising that perhaps I was being a little ungracious, asked her to come again.

She actually blushed and replied: "I'll see." I said to myself: "I'll wait."

To my astonishment, at tea-time the parlourmaid came in like a fury and accused me of flirting with Mrs. C——'s niece. "You've no right carryin' on with ladies of 'igh position when you are nearly keeping company with me."

I was too taken aback to reply. This was indeed news to me. Things promised to be very awkward. I had no desire to

be entangled with the parlourmaid, however pretty she might be.

I did my utmost to pacify this little wild-cat, but the more I spoke the more she raved. The cook did her best to calm her ; a saucepan at her head was the only result.

I fled to my room to think things out. Should I stay or go as quickly as I could ? Work was difficult to find.

The problem was solved for me the next day in a very unexpected and disagreeable manner.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. Mrs. C—— was out. The parlourmaid was dusting or polishing the bannisters. As I passed her to go to Mrs. C——'s room, she made a violent grab at me and flung her arms round my neck.

In these very trying circumstances, what is a wretched man to do when the girl is pretty ? I did it. And at that very moment Mrs. C——'s infuriated voice disturbed this very romantic situation.

The poor girl fled with a shriek, and left me to face the full blast of Mrs. C——'s wrath.

This poor, unloved woman sacked me there and then, as she "could not possibly have a young man perverting the moral atmosphere of her house." Her husband's language evidently was of no account.

I was sorry to leave, being quite certain

such another situation would be hard to find.

I left without seeing anything more of the girl I had kissed on the stairs. How many times had I not done the very same thing in England? They weren't always parlourmaids either.

XV.—I turn "Drummer" and learn much of many articles.

O'Leary and the landlady were very upset to hear of my misfortune, although it struck them as being very humorous.

I had managed to save a little money, having received a month's pay with my notice, which enabled me to look round for a new job with some comfort.

O'Leary's partnership was not proving a success, and he was also looking out for a job in his spare time.

I discovered an advertisement asking for a good commercial traveller, and presented myself to the firm in answer to their advertisement.

The manager, for a wonder, was quite pleasant and affable. He asked me whether I had any experience in "drumming."

I replied without hesitation that I had done a great deal of it in England. This quite satisfied him. He explained that he

wanted to liven up his business, which consisted of toilet requisites, Jeyes' fluid, poisons to kill every kind of insect, disinfectants, toilet paper and soaps.

I hadn't bargained for this particular assortment of merchandise. However, I couldn't afford to choose.

I was to get no salary, but had to depend entirely on the orders I received, and on which I should get a commission.

He handed me two bags. One was filled with disinfectants and the other with soaps of all kinds.

He then handed me samples of toilet paper. I had never seen so many different kinds. I didn't know they even existed.

There was thick, thin, scented, perforated, unperforated, crinkly, and some which felt and looked like cardboard.

I stuffed these specimens into my various pockets. Toilet paper stuck out on all sides of me. I looked like Christmas decorations, and felt more like a gentleman's cloak-room than a human being, and began to wish myself a thousand miles away.

He instructed me to visit all the hotels and then go from house to house. The man was undoubtedly an optimist. I very much doubted whether I should get as far as an hotel.

He wished me luck, and out I sallied

into a new world which spelt Sanitas and Jeyes, feeling very self-conscious and sure that every passer-by realised I was a commercial traveller, and a very unsavoury one at that.

My first stop was Portage Hotel, a very large and much frequented place.

Nothing daunted, I walked boldly in. The porter, a huge nigger, eyed me with suspicion and asked me my business.

I told him I wanted to see the manager.

"What you want see manager for?" I politely told him that that was entirely my business.

"Your bisness my bisness, mister. Manager very bisy feller. He ain't got no time for drummers."

Discovered! Lord! I must have had it written all over me. Then I suddenly realised that various bits of toilet paper were sticking out of my several pockets.

I must have got very red, for the wretched nigger grinned; but he was a kind-hearted fellow on the whole, and said he would see what he could do for me.

He came back and invited me to follow him. He led me through a couple of swing doors and through an office full of men and girls, who eyed me as though I was a strange being from another planet.

"Here's the feller, boss," said the nigger by way of an introduction.



The boss was seated in a revolving chair, both feet on his desk, and chewing the largest cigar I have ever seen.

Every second or two he would switch the cigar from one side of his mouth to the other, and spit an incredible distance into a little brass pot the size of a finger bowl.

I stood there rooted to the spot. This amazing feat fascinated me, although I had seen some first-class performers in the short time I had been in the country.

However, he soon brought me to my senses by rasping "Wall?" in the most unpleasant voice I had ever heard.

I came to my point with surprising frankness. "I have the most wonderful bug-killing lotion and flea-destroying fluid which is possible to be found. I am quite sure that you must have these little fellows—I mean bugs and fleas—in your hotel, and so——" I never got any farther. With an infuriated yell he bounded from his chair, purple with rage, and shrieked at me: "You G—d d—d Britisher! tell me that my hotel is full of bugs, and by the look of your pockets you'd possibly have the nerve to tell me something else if I'd let you! Get the hell out of it!"

Whereupon my friend the nigger appeared on the scene, took me by the scruff of the neck, and kicked me with unerring precision through the office full of girls

and men, through the swing doors, across the marble hall, and straight through the revolving doors on to the hard pavement outside.

There I sat with every bottle I possessed broken, smelling like a sewer and looking like a drain, a picture of misery and mortification.

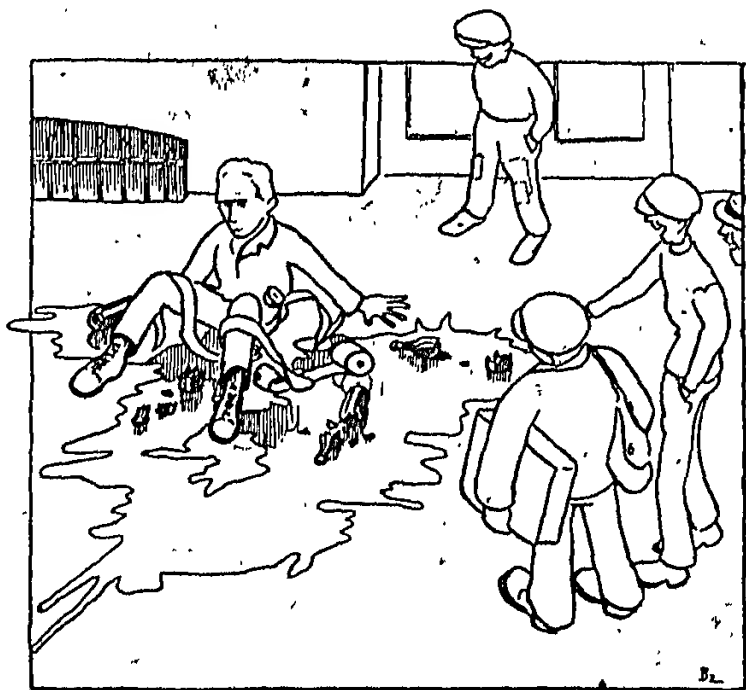
My troubles were not over. Looking like a burst pipe, I immediately attracted the attention of a very critical crew, who, scenting not only that I was English, but the disinfectants as well, began to air their rotten Canadian humour at my expense.

"Say, guy, can't you find something better to bath in? Why not disguise yourself as a roll and hang yourself?" (Unfortunately the toilet paper was in great disorder.) "Some 'ad.!' Gee, boys, guess nothing would live in Jeyes', not even 'im."

This sort of thing would have gone on for some time had not a friendly policeman strolled up and dispersed the crowd. He helped me to salvage what I could, and said that it reminded him of the "Wreck of the Hesperus."

When I found myself alone I reflected upon my position, and came to the logical conclusion that I wasn't fitted to be a "drummer."

In fact, it was quite obvious that, I wasn't fitted for anything; but money is a necessary evil. I either had to continue as a commercial traveller or attempt something else.



THERE I SAT WITH EVERY BOTTLE I POSSESSED BROKEN.

I sat dejectedly on a friendly doorstep and seriously considered my position. It was no use returning to the firm and

admitting myself a failure or shamefacedly producing an assortment of broken bottles. The only alternative was to chuck it, and leave my remaining samples as a peace offering to the lady on whose steps I had been sitting.

Chuck it I did, and left everything which was likely to remind me of "drumming" behind me.

On telling O'Leary of my adventures he could do nothing but laugh; indeed, I thought he would never cease.

I dined alone that night, and wasn't even allowed in with the cheese.

**XVI.—I officiate as "Night-nurse" to a bad case of "Oirish."**

The next morning my landlady again came to my rescue. She had heard from a friend, who also kept a boarding-house, that her husband was suffering from acute D.T.s, and badly needed a night-nurse. She frankly told me that it would be difficult to get anyone to undertake the job, and thought me "eminently fitted for the position." I felt flattered but somewhat puzzled as to why she held me in such high esteem.

I was quite prepared to take anything on within reason, but to nurse drunken men had not entered my mind. However,

young men who are up against things must not throw away the chance of making money, and as long as the pay was adequate, there was no reason why I should not try my hand in the "Spiritual World"; I had done worse things.

Accordingly, I set out to interview this unfortunate spouse.

O'Leary's parting shot was that he hoped I hadn't to tackle Irish whisky.

The poor unfortunate mate was a fat Irishwoman (O'Leary seemed to have "scented" trouble), good-natured, and willing to be generous.

I accepted this enviable position for five dollars per night. My duties were to commence at seven in the evening, and punctually at seven I arrived to collect my patient.

There he was sitting in the parlour surrounded by a very heterogeneous crew, drinking neat IRISH WHISKY out of a bottle (O'Leary must have been in the plot).

His wife instructed me to take him up to bed as her boarders were about to come in to dinner, and he might prove a nuisance. (The word—might—has proved her to be an optimist.)

This order was easier given than performed. His alcoholic lordship refused to budge an inch, much to the amusement of his ribald companions.

With the utmost patience I tried to coax him to bestir himself to more congenial quarters; that is to say, I described to him, with an imagination which would have put Edgar Allan Poe to shame, the delight and charm of his new companion, myself, and the "spirited" times we would have elsewhere. His wife interrupted me at this juncture, and said that he didn't understand that kind of language, but if I called him a —— drunkard it might stir his pride.

I immediately complied, and, sure enough, he resented it.

"Who are yer (hic) calling (hic) a (hic) —— drunkard? Sure, Paddy's as sober as the Bishop of Toronto (hic)." This showed the gentleman to possess a greater imagination than my own. This five dollars was not going to be so easily earned. There is nothing in the whole wide world as obstinate as a drunkard. Not even an A.S.C. mule.

His wife, with a philosophical silence, arms akimbo, was eyeing me with a little impatience and mild contempt.

At last she interfered, and breaking into my patient pleadings, said: "You'll niver get this nice gentleman up by reciting to him; you let me do it." Whereupon she grasped him firmly by the neck and round the knees, lifted him off the ground

like a sack of wheat, and calmly carried him upstairs, and deposited him on his bed. Habit and experience are essential in all work.

Needless to relate, I was left disconcertedly standing in the midst of a jeering crowd, being totally unable to enter the lists against a strong and buxom Irish dame.

I found my amiable patient shouting foul epithets at his departing wife, and I endeavoured to calm him. On looking back upon those dreadful days I cannot help wondering how I could have been so kind and patient. I hadn't had sufficient experience with D.T.s to be anything else.

Talking to him seemed to be a waste of time, so I pretended to take no notice of him, but as soon as my back was turned he made a spring at me, took me completely by surprise, and knocked me clean over. Before I could rise and take measures he had escaped from the room, and was tumbling downstairs at the rate of an express train.

He made straight for the larder. He got inside and locked himself in.

I felt then that my doom was sealed, and that every scrap of drink would go before it would be possible to get him up again.

How to get him out was a question which

would have puzzled Sherlock Holmes himself.

I dared not break the door down for fear of disturbing the household. It was not a bit of good reasoning with him; he was too busy drinking every drop of alcohol in the larder. There were ten bottles, and I felt sure he would do for the lot.

'Tis strange that in these critical moments sudden and brilliant ideas flash into a man's mind without rhyme or reason. A wonderful scheme flashed through mine, and I immediately acted upon it.

Groping my way to the parlour in which I had been introduced to my drunken friend on the previous evening, I felt almost certain of finding the remains of his whisky, and, sure enough, it had been put into the cupboard, which I was lucky enough to find unlocked.

Taking the whisky and returning to the larder, I discovered that my "client" was beginning to make a noise, and that I was perhaps just in time to save the situation.

I uncorked the bottle and poured out a little of the whisky at the bottom of the door. I then proceeded to pretend that I was talking to someone. "Excellent whisky this—try some?"—then paused,



and by this time the smell of the whisky had reached the Irishman's delicate nostrils, and having heard my invitation to my imaginary friend, he did exactly what I anticipated he would do. He opened the door in a great rage and demanded that he should have some whisky. The rest was easy. I simply carried him back to his room and put him on to the bed. As drunk as he was he realised that I had outwitted him, and although he resented it, he gave me no further trouble that night.

Drunkenness has never impressed me so much. The Spartans were indeed wise and sensible in showing their children the ghastly consequences of excessive drinking.

For five days I tended this lunatic with wavering fortune. Sometimes he was quiet, and at others he became a perfect fiend. I had to give it up. The strain was far too great. Had I hit him on the head twice nightly with a brick-bat I should have had a comparatively easy time, but one can't do that. I was extremely sorry for the poor wretch.

It had been the very worst week that I have ever spent in my life, but I had managed to make 35 dollars.

O'Leary was very relieved to hear that

I wasn't going to look after this lunatic any more. "It's no work for a gentleman. I don't mind getting drunk meself, but Oi'll be shivered if Oi'd look after anybody who was."

I thought this very sound philosophy, and vowed that I never would again, not even for 100 dollars a night.

That evening I received a letter from a man who had been told I was at Wollaboo, saying that he was willing to give me a job in his office in F——, Central British Columbia.

It was with great trepidation that I set out for the West. The "Trail of '98" still held my imagination.

My farewell to O'Leary was very English and unemotional. We merely shook hands and wished one another the best of luck. Underneath this show of unconcern we felt the parting very keenly. We had become very firm friends, and there was no knowing whether we should ever meet again.

I had sufficient money to take me as far as McB——; farther than that I had to trust to luck.

McB—— is the other side of the Rockies. I was very much impressed with these wonderful mountains, their ruggedness, and the magnificent wildness of the country.

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Mount Robson dominated, and being a glorious day, it was indeed a fine picture.

McB—— proved to be a dirty, one-eyed hole built entirely of wood. Apart from a rickety hotel the town afforded very poor accommodation for travellers. There were one or two evil-looking saloons, and any number of eating-houses, mostly run by Chinamen.

XVII.—I try a Chinese dinner, also “Hoboing,” which I found economical but very painful.

I arrived in this God-forsaken spot with about \$6.50. This was all I had in the world. I felt as miserable as the devil, and very homesick, and regretted my haste in leaving Wollaboo.

I decided to try and get some work to earn my night's lodging, but to my distress I found McB—— little less than a gambling hell. As for work, no one seemed to do any.

Wollaboo was a city—this was a muck heap. Emerson tells us “Cities give us collision.” ’Tis said, “London and New York take the nonsense out of a man.” I don't think Emerson could ever have seen this place.

If my reader has ever found himself six thousand odd miles away from home with only a few dollars in his pocket, he will readily understand my feelings.

I toured this miserable place for some time before I could bring myself to spend part of my remaining funds on food. I eventually decided that hunger was quite an unnecessary discomfort when there is a possibility of procuring something to allay it. I stepped inside an evil-smelling hutch which described itself as Ching Ling Soo Restaurant, or some such name.

I sat down at a clothless table, and was immediately addressed by the ugliest and vilest-looking Chinaman I had ever seen, and ordered chop suee, not because I liked it, but it was cheaper than anything else, and a cup of coffee.

My presence in this Black Hole of Pekin seemed to attract attention. I felt distinctly ill at ease. There were one or two tough-looking "guys" who could easily have made very short work of me. I felt sure they were planning some devilment in order to rob me, and chuckled to think what they would find.

Having finished my meal, the very worst I have ever had, I prepared to leave, but noticed one of the men make for the door, and as I passed he put his foot out. Being on the alert I saw his intention and caught hold of the door, saving myself from plunging headlong to the ground. I turned round and hit him straight between the eyes. Not waiting to see the extent

of damage, I took to my heels as fast as I could sprint, and expected to be followed, but they must have thought better of it, for nothing further happened.

I went back to the railway station and discovered that a freight train was due through about eight o'clock that evening, and resolved to try my hand at "hoboing." This is a term used for men who get from one town to another by boarding the freight trains and risking being discovered. I followed the line until I came to a curve, knowing that the train would have to slow up. Here I waited patiently, having not the slightest idea as to how to get inside one of the passing trucks, but left it to Fate, feeling sure that I should act on the spur of the moment. I have a great faith in momentary instincts.

It had now become very dark, which suited my purpose, giving every chance of not being detected by the brakesman.

About nine o'clock the freight train came rumbling along at a snail's pace, largely owing to the fact that the line was quite new and very bad.

I chose the centre of the train, and made a leap for the footboard of one of the open trucks and clambered over the sides, and so far not being discovered.

I found the truck to be full of milk-cans. This served my purpose, and squeezing

myself between the cans made myself as comfortable as possible, and being dog-tired soon fell asleep. How long I slept I don't know, but on awaking dawn was breaking, and I was stiff with cold and cramp. It was with the greatest difficulty that I managed to stand up. To my horror I found the brakesman was in the next truck. I hadn't a cent to spare with which to bribe him. The only thing to do was to rely on his charity and good nature. Unfortunately he possessed neither.

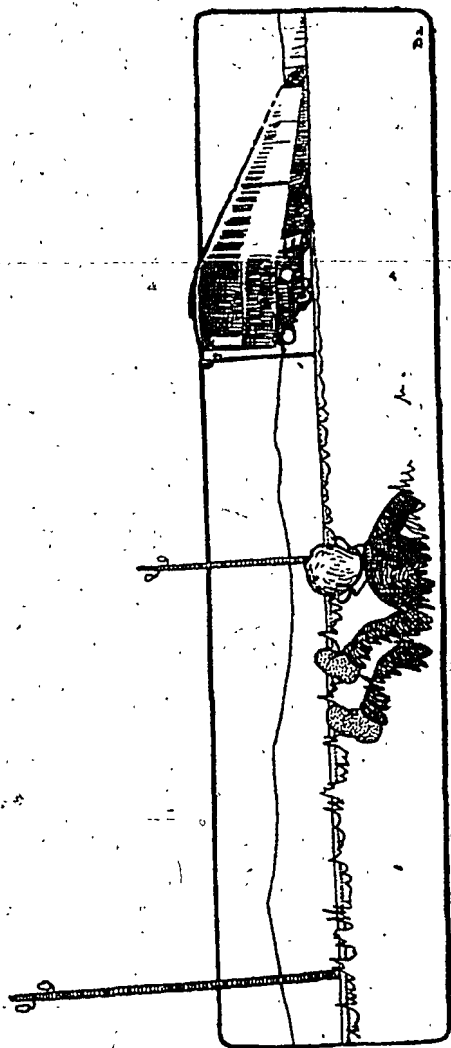
His language positively shocked me, but the way he slung me off the train proved a greater shock. With a bound he was at my side. He collared me by the neck, and lifted me with his boot clean over the sides on to the grassy track.

Luckily for me the train was moving very slowly, otherwise these memoirs would not now be written.

I never felt nearer death as I hurtled through the air to land goodness knew where. Fortunately I was so stiff that I made no attempt to save myself, but collapsed like a sack on a grass bank.

I lay there for some time, thoroughly shaken and frightened, not knowing whether every bone in my body was broken or not.

I vaguely remember seeing the train



I COLLAPSED LIKE A SACK ON A GRASS BANK.

disappear round the bend and hearing the brakesman's parting salvo of curses.

On struggling to my feet I soon discovered that Fate had once more been kind to me. My anatomy was complete, but my seating accommodation was far from comfortable.

I hadn't the remotest idea as to where the train had deposited me, or yet how far it was from my destination. I resolved "to hike it," and trust to falling in with a working party or a lumber camp.

I must have walked for some hours before coming across any signs of habitation. There were several freight cars, converted into dwelling-houses, a little off the track. I perceived a woman cooking breakfast and several men seated around smoking. They looked at me curiously. Probably a Norfolk jacket did look strange in the wilds of B. C.

They seemed quite pleasant, and the woman was passably pretty. One of the men asked me where I was bound for, and what doing in this part of the country. I told him briefly my adventures with the train and my ultimate destination. They all laughed at my rude experience, and offered me a share of their breakfast.

I did not need to be asked twice. I was very hungry, and had had nothing since my meal at the Ching Ling Soo.



I soon discovered that my host was an engineer and surveyor and was in charge of the camp. He was an Englishman of the public school stamp. A very pleasant fellow indeed. He introduced me to his wife, a hard-working little woman, who spent most of her time looking after the comforts of the men. It must have been pretty hard work for a London-bred girl. Apart from her work there was not much else to do.

I enjoyed my breakfast, and felt that life was well worth living. It is astonishing what a difference an interior "well-lined with capon" makes to one's outlook on life. I am not a greedy man, but am never more miserable than when feeling hungry. I have the greatest sympathy for the poor devil who, when starving, steals a loaf of bread. He is not to be compared with the man who can steal another's wife and escape punishment.

As a crowning act of generosity, my good friend the engineer presented me with a free pass, which allowed me to board the train with a light heart and with excusable swagger.

#### XVIII.—I move on with a Free Pass, and nothing more.

I reached my destination without further mishap, had been the proud possessor of a ticket and a legitimate right to a seat

in a colonist carriage, and had leaned back upon my hard seat and smoked a borrowed cigarette with a plutocratic mien.

*"Voluptates commendat rarior usus."*

There is no doubt that Juvenal had never suffered the undignified experience of being ejected from a train in motion, but whatever experience prompted him to quote this truism, it was aptly proved in my case.

Although the journey had taken over six hours, it had not seemed long to me. The country through which we passed had been one never-ending scene of beauty.

The grandeur and vastness had taken my breath away. I felt very much what a beetle would probably feel if he found himself in the middle of a ballroom floor. So vast is this country that much of it has never been trodden by human feet. Indeed, there were very few signs of habitation. At long intervals a few rudely fashioned log huts hugged the railroad to afford accommodation for the working gangs and engineers.

I was in the country of trappers, the hardy men of the Hudson Bay Company and the Indian. How fond I had been of reading of their many exploits in my youth!

We skirted the foot of Mount Robson, the majestic chief of the Rockies. Many

pages could I fill in describing the wonders and beauty of our great Dominion, but I do not wish to weary the reader, neither have I space or time to do so.

Unfortunately F—— did not fulfil my expectations. At a first glance it seemed to be a desolate place consisting of bare-looking hutments. These buildings varied in size according to the "size" of the owner's pockets. Large or small they were mostly uniform. Nearly all the surrounding trees had been hewn. The place looked deserted. The few people I saw slouched along as though they were afraid of being seen. This I discovered later was the usual Western habit of walking. They ambulated as though they had a thousand years in which to live and nothing to do in the time. The most noticeable feature seemed to be the almost total absence of petticoats.

These observations snuffed out the last flicker of optimism which I had so carefully striven to protect from the chill winds of pessimism. Home-sickness saturated me, and I came to the conclusion that there is much similarity between home-sickness and sea-sickness, the one because you see too much sea, and the other because you can't see all you want to see. Perhaps it is a better, if cruder, simile to say that one you reach and the

other you don't. However, I reached the hotel after plodding a dusty road. It must have been a road, as it was thus marked upon a semi-concealed boarding.

The hotel, a crude edifice built of wood, unsafe, draughty, dour and dirty, dispelled my last and remaining illusions, if any, and such as they were.

Comfort was to be entirely discounted until such time as my spirit failed me, and I was ready to accept the "good veal" which "might" welcome my return home.

My new task-master greeted me in the hall. He had heard of my arrival. As to how he did so still remains a mystery to me, but as few people are mad enough, especially Englishmen, to visit this "tourist centre" (aptly described, by a Scotsman of suspicious origin, as "the last place in hell"), it is possible that I had been signalled by the cloud of dust I had kicked up along the road.

Having offered me several glasses of rye, commonly called a "whisky-chaser" in these parts, he summed up sufficient courage to inform me that he was sorry to have asked me to undertake such a long and arduous (and in parts painful) a journey, as now that I was here without a red cent, he could barely afford to employ me for a month.

"*Omne solum forti patria est,*" once

wrote Ovid. I am glad he did, for these lines certainly helped me to keep a smiling face. It was very plain that I should have to find another job, and to do this it was also very evident that I should require the patience of another Job.

I remained in the hotel for one night, nor would I have remained longer had I been Mr. Rockefeller. It was quite the most uncomfortable place I had ever experienced.

The next day I found a lodging in a tumble-down shack situated in the middle of some waste land.

My room is well worth a description. If you can imagine a canary cage squared you will arrive at a fairly accurate conception of the dimensions of my sleeping apartment.

The ceiling, or rather the roof, was so constructed as to allow me to study the heavens at my leisure. Venus was plainly to be seen, alas!—and bitter irony—only the planet.

My bed was made to fit the room; would that it had been otherwise! When it rained I was completely inundated.

My wash-basin, barely large enough to hold a tooth-brush, made shift as a gutter when it rained, and reposed at the end of the bed. My mackintosh was my winding-sheet.

I possessed a window which never opened. If I permitted myself the luxury of an early morning stretch I barked the knuckles of one hand on the rough boarding and put the other through the window.

My bath consisted of the rain-tub outside, and was plainly visible from the road.

Uncomfortable as it was, I soon got used to this little "tumble-down nest," and was grateful enough to be able to spend a quiet evening in it whenever the opportunity afforded. It is indeed strange what a great part habit plays in life.

Perhaps the only thing I could not accustom myself to was the mosquitoes and the abnormally large moths and spiders.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the end of the month my work came to an end. My occupation had not proved to be an unpleasant one. It had consisted of daily dustings, myself included, and tidying up the office, now and again typing a belated letter or visiting a far-distant client. I was given a horse on such occasions, and these were red-letter days to me.

My employer being an insurance agent, among other things, I had very often to visit houses in order to survey them. On more than one occasion the proprietors

had offered me a cigarette and seriously asked me not to be too careful as to where I dropped my match. If the match was successfully disposed of I should have \$50 as a reward for my thoroughness.

I need not mention that I declined these very tempting offers.

Such incidents give one a very good idea of the state of British Columbia ten years ago.

Although life had been somewhat dull and uninteresting, it grieved me to have to leave. I preferred certainty to scant possibility. This is the way with most people, and it is well that it is so, otherwise there would be very little chance of finding men and women ready to work in offices for small salaries and a life of hopeless monotony. It is often the sense of security which stifles initiative and ambition.

During my brief stay I had made a few friends, mostly of doubtful character, but, still, they were a good lot of fellows, although rough and uncouth; but life was rough. I think that very often the roughest were the most sincere.

#### XIX.—Introduces Scraggy and McBlane.

One of my most intimate acquaintances was a man who kept a small luncheon counter, and boasted of the name of

Scraggy. This was a name given to him, not by his forefathers, but by his clients. There was nothing scraggy about him. Mr. Pickwick would have been envious of his rotundity. I am afraid that my friendship for this corpulent little man had much "cupboard love" in it; he had proffered me more than one free meal; and but for his generosity it would have gone very ill with me on several occasions.

I repaid this "edible stipend" by helping him to wash up and scrape his frying-pans. There were times indeed when I would have willingly cleaned the whole of the Woolworth building for a good platter of beef.

One day, as I was in the midst of fraternising with a goodly frying-pan or so, there walked in a burly man, grizzled and of florid mien. He perched himself upon one of the high stools, and in a strong Scots accent requested that a large veal chop should immediately be served.

Scraggy and this Scotsman seemed to be old friends, for they cursed one another roundly for some few minutes.

The Scotsman was introduced to me as McBlane, a prospector of some renown, reputed to have been one of the pioneers of the Cobalt mines.

He eyed me strangely as he ate. Having finished, he wiped his mouth on his shirt-sleeve and addressed me :



"I ken that you be looking for a job? Well, looker here, I've gotter job for you, but it means real work and G—d d—d hard work too."

I replied that I didn't mind hard work as long as I got something to do.

"Wall, I guess I don't give much for remittance-men, and especially for Englishmen, but seeing as you be one of Scraggy's pals, yer can hitch up to me."

I replied that I wasn't a remittance-man, but that I was proud to call myself an Englishman.

"That's a matter of opinion," he growled in answer; "a Scotsman was the only person worth a curse."

As to that I quite agreed with him, and told him so. This in no way angered him; in fact, I think he rather appreciated the reply.

He suggested that I should join him on a prospecting expedition. He thought he knew where we might find coal somewhere in the direction of the Pilot Mountains. A Canadian, a Dane, a Swede, and a half-caste Indian would make up the party. I should not expect to get any pay, but should be fed and allowed to stake a coal claim.

I hailed this proposition with delight, and regarded it as my salvation.

We were to start the following morning

at the hour of five-thirty, so as to be able to cover a good deal of ground before the heat of the day. As far as McBlane could judge, we should in all probability strike coal about fifteen to twenty miles west of F—. At any rate, he hoped so, as it would be easier to re-victual at a short distance.

With the help of my cigarette case I managed to retain my room for another eight weeks. This enabled me to leave such things as I possessed behind, and also gave me a place wherein to lay my head if occasion demanded it.

XX.—I try prospecting and sniff Hades again—but see Coal.

The next morning at the hour of five-thirty, after a bath in the rain-tub (it occurred to me that I might easily have emulated George Clarence, but my drowning would have been in a butt of rain, and not malmsey), I joined my coal-heaving colleagues at the provision shop.

We loaded ourselves up to the extent of sixty pounds per man, and each carried in addition a pick and a shovel.

McBlane led this nondescript party, and although he was not a young man, he led off at a good round pace which would have put many a young man to shame.

I was soon initiated into the joys of "tie" walking. A tie is the Canadian word for a sleeper. Unlike our method of laying, they are placed at irregular intervals and indiscriminately. They consist of rough-hewn trunks, and are placed at a convenient striding distance. It is the most tiring method of circulation, as never by any chance is there a tie which is not a little farther or a little nearer than the other, with the result that one is continually obliged to break step. Really a most heart-breaking business. The other men seemed to take little notice, but to me it was purgatory. I would sometimes slip, and on more than one occasion nearly broke my ankle. After the first four miles my load seemed to weigh a ton. We could not possibly leave the track as the undergrowth was far too thick.

My feet were very sore and my back fit to break. I dare not complain, as I was certain of getting no sympathy, and more than that, there was the risk of being sent back as useless.

Every five miles we covered McBlane called a halt. I think one suffered more through these halts than in the actual walking. It was so painful getting on to one's feet again.

We came across little bushes, growing very profusely, covered with small blue

berries. These were exceedingly good and refreshing to eat.

McBlane led us up hill and down dale, covering a distance of seventeen weary miles. When we finally halted, I think that most of us would have willingly accepted death as a happy release from soreness and weariness.

We all flopped down with the exception of our leader, who seemed to be doing a good deal of mysterious scratching with his pick. He nosed around like an old mastiff, and scratched about like a bereaved hen.

At last, to my intense astonishment, he suddenly gave a great shout as of one possessed:

"Youwrecker! Youwrecker!"

"Who?" said I, rising, despite my fatigue, and scenting a tragedy; then suddenly it dawned upon me that this noble Scotsman, this old and hoary miner, was repeating the famous cry of Archimedes. In other words, McBlane had found evidence of the coal which he had come to prospect.

Why he should have told us of this discovery by shouting what was meant to convey "*Eureka*" was, and is still, a psychological problem to me, unless he was taking the name of some tooth-paste in vain.

We were too tired to examine the find. I do not think I could have conquered sleep for all the coal, coke, gold and silver mines in the world.

I awoke as the sun went down. The men were already at work. I felt rather ashamed of myself for having slept for so long, and greatly appreciated the fact that these rough diamonds had not disturbed me.

Fortunately for us, we discovered an old log-hut which must have been used some time or another by a trapper as his winter quarters.

It was a melancholy-looking shanty and small. A raised platform about two feet from the ground and about six in depth extended the whole length of the wall. It had evidently been used as a bed for collective use.

A dilapidated stove, which still found the courage to brave this material world, hiccupped in a corner:

Two windows still contained glass, which was a pity, for had it not been so we should have been able to see without from within.

The place was a mass of cobwebs, which gave the appearance of a London fog. The mosquitoes were as plentiful as the manna which is reputed to have rained down from heaven in the years gone by.

This was the delightful "mansion" in which we were to be boarded, fed and rested for an undefined period.

McBlane was not only a miner, but quite a reputable cook. Unfortunately the cooking had to be done inside the hut on the none too steady stove. The smoke lodged itself firmly in one's throat, and the smell of cooking nested at the top of one's nose.

The five of us slept in a row on the aforesaid platform. I unfortunately drew the half-caste as a neighbour; he was none too pleasant a fellow. I had grave doubts as to whether he knew that water, apart from drinking purposes, had other uses.

The Swede and the Dane, to say nothing of McBlane, possessed Wagnerian accomplishments; so much so that I found it, tired as I was, impossible to sleep. I arose, therefore, and not being able to take up my bed, slipped out without it, and, destitute of blankets, found a resting place on virgin soil, preferring the howling of coyotes and the hoot of the owl to the blatant blarings of my fellow-creatures.

The next morning we sank a shaft in the hillside. I know nothing of mining, and therefore cannot give a technical description of this work. All that I can say is, that there was a great deal of

shouting, much blasphemy, and not a little disagreement.

We discovered two very creditable eight-inch seams of coal and every indication of further discoveries.

After three days hard digging I was despatched to F—— for further supplies of food, which were beginning to run out.

I started off at five-thirty in the morning, and was back by seven in the evening, loaded like a pack-horse. These were heart-breaking trips which invariably killed me with fatigue.

I acted as a Carter Paterson van three times a week for nearly a month. We had made excellent headway with the coal digging, and had widened both seams to a very large extent.

The time was now ripe for registering our claims at Government House.

We had completed all the work necessary for one year; now only remained to find capital to form a Company.

McBlane took it upon himself to do this. I had very serious qualms as to the kind of *Company* he would collect.

His programme was to first try the big Western towns, and if unsuccessful he would proceed East and try there.

We therefore broke camp and returned to F——.

I was now the proud proprietor of a

coal claim, but the sad possessor of empty pockets.

On paper I was probably a future millionaire, but the present found me in very bad pecuniary circumstances.

**XXI.**—Although an embryo Millionaire I help Scraggy run the Restaurant.

On my return to F—— I paid a visit to my old friend Scraggy, who hailed me with great delight. I discovered he had helped to finance this coal collusion, and had even financed my share, but though very grateful and much touched by his goodness, I didn't like being under an obligation to him, and proposed that I should help him in his restaurant in payment of my debt to him, which had not amounted to a great deal. He agreed to this, and so I seriously applied myself to studying the art of waffle-making, steak-frying, potato peeling, and the feeding of hungry men.

The fact that I was a little better than a kitchenmaid did not stop me from visiting the more genteel and prosperous element of F——.

There were one or two specimens of the feminine sex to be found, though in this region it was very nearly extinct.



The only solicitor of which F—— could boast possessed a wife of passable allurements. She was a hospitable little person and frequently asked me to dine. How on earth her husband scraped a living was a marvel to me.

It seems to me that we all lived under the illusion that, owing to the railway, F—— would one day become a town of some importance. This is why many men hung on by their eyebrows. It was indeed a slender hope. It was a town which had been exploited by the real estate men.

It had been advertised broadcast, and many of them, not being overburdened with delicate scruples, had been prepared to spread some fine fairy tales. It is true that the railways (the C.P.R. and C.N.R.) formed a junction, and that it was quite possible the railway people might build their Round houses there, but that was a matter for speculation and not certainty.

Finally, alas! these prophecies were not realised, and accordingly the fortunes of F—— died a natural death, and with them the hopes of many a man.

In the meantime things were getting worse and worse. Few people made money and travellers were scarce. Such a state of things was no good to my poor friend Scraggy. Not more than half a dozen

people came to his restaurant per day. He talked of leaving and trying his fortunes farther afield.

I didn't want him to go. He had been, so to speak, my fairy godmother, and without him I saw an empty stomach and a tightening belt. Apart from these very material instincts, I had grown quite fond of the little man, and knew that I should feel very lonely if he went.

However, I persuaded him to stay on for a little while, at any rate until the winter.

Although I had work which found me three square meals a day, I had nevertheless not a cent to bless myself with.

My wardrobe was getting very low and causing me some anxiety. My boots were wearing out, and I had no money with which to get them repaired. My socks were in a deplorable state of neglect, and had been darned until there was practically nothing more to darn. Very uncomfortable it was too.

I discreetly suggested to Scraggy that I should endeavour to find something to do which would enable me make a few odd dollars, and at the same time still allow me to help him. The little man was kindness itself, and quite agreed that I should try to make a few dollars. In any case he had barely enough custom to keep himself employed.

XXII.—I sing at a Cinema—my Efforts are fruitful.

He suggested that I should try and get a job at the local cinema. The proprietor was a personal friend of his, and he would introduce me, and would ask him if he could do anything for me.

As bad as things were, the cinema was the only thing which seemed to make money.

Scraggy took me round to see him that very evening. I found him to be an extraordinary nice fellow. He was quite willing to give me something to do at a small salary, and asked me if I could sing.

As a matter of fact, I did possess a fairly passable baritone, and told him so. He then asked me if I should like to sing for him twice a day for a dollar a time. I needed no persuading, and jumped at the opportunity, blessing the good God for having given me a voice.

Unfortunately the one and only drawback to this new venture was the fact that I hadn't a single song, nor had Jones, the cinema chief, and never having been capable of learning a song by heart, the result was that without the words I was completely bunkered.

Once more Scraggy came to the rescue with a most obvious suggestion that Jones should buy me some.

F—— did happen to boast of a fairly respectable shop which kept anything from a \$200 gramophone to a packet of hair-pins.

This unique store was kept by the sweetest old couple one could possibly meet. They were Americans of a very good family, but unfortunately they had lost most of their money, and with the little they could save they had left New York and started this shop.

They came to F—— for precisely the same reason already mentioned; they had seen it advertised and boosted by the real estate merchants.

Now, owing to the slump, they could never hope to realise their stock.

I found the songs I wanted—songs that I had sung hundreds of times before. My mother had taught me to sing them. Most of them were being sung by the "Follies."

I paid a visit to the vicar that night and asked him to run them over for me. The good man was delighted. He probably found it a change after the monotonous hymns on a time-worn organ.

I mounted the platform the following day with some degree of nervousness. The theatre was very nearly full. It had not taken long for the news to spread that a young Englishman, of no fixed abode, possessing the greatest baritone voice ever

ERRATUM.

Page 111, line 12, for *Shanamar* read *Shalimar*.



heard in British Columbia (I was quite willing to believe it), had been engaged to sing at an enormous salary.

If I had thought that I was going to get a warm reception I was sadly mistaken. I was greeted with a most disconcerting silence; and felt that many of the people present had come armed with missiles to throw at me.

I started off with the Indian Love Lyrics, but in the middle of "Pale hands I loved beside the Shanamar" some unfeeling individual yelled out "Chuck it," and chuck it I did. Jones shouted to me to try something else, and so I switched off to "Hullo! hullo! it's a different girl again!" Whereupon, as if by magic, the temper of the audience changed, and when I had finished they shouted themselves hoarse. Although I didn't think much of their taste, I was considerably elated.

Scraggy was delighted to hear of my success, and made me join the fire brigade on the strength of it. This I very willingly did, as it meant a few extra dollars.

For the first time for many weeks I was able to offer Scraggy a drink.

It was indeed pleasant to stand in the glare of the saloon lights and to hear the musical tinkle of the billiard balls. When one leads a simple and hard life one enjoys simple pleasures. To me this was almost

as enjoyable as the days when my dear old father took me out to a theatre.

I am afraid it must be admitted that I took more than one drink, and on returning home to my wretched hovel my gait was none too steady. Rye whisky is pernicious stuff at the best of times, and when one isn't accustomed to taking it, a very little will bowl one over.

Owing to the happy state in which I sought my primitive couch, I distinctly remember placing my boots outside the door. The next morning they had gone.

This was a sad loss, as I had only another pair in my possession.

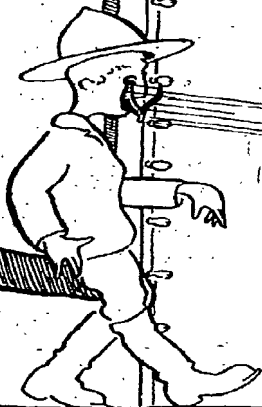
Unfortunately there were times when my audience varied, especially when the lumbermen and cowboys had been paid their monthly wages. They used to flock to the town and paint it red and leave again when they had drunk it dry.

They were tough customers, and not above throwing things at me if the songs were not to their liking.

On one occasion a drunken half-caste slung a banana skin, which he had timed to hit me as I was negotiating a particularly difficult top note.

The missile struck me full on my wide-open mouth with a resounding smack which brought the house down. The note finished up like the wail of a one o'clock





SLUNG A BANANA SKIN AT ME.

back, as hard as I could heave it, but unfortunately my shot went wide and caught the hotel proprietor's wife in the middle of her ample bosom. The lady screamed, and the audience laughed more heartily than ever.

By this time Jones was in a fury, but fortunately for me I was born with a sense of humour.

"Here sportful laughter dwells, here ever sitting,  
Defies all lumpish griefs and wrinkled care."

("The Purple Island.")

I laughed nearly as immoderately as Calchas, but only capered metaphorically. My laughter appealed to the audience, inasmuch as I was the injured party of the banana episode. They realised I had every right to be exceedingly angry. Jones, under the circumstances, considered it to be better policy to overlook the matter, and merely asked the audience in a few well-chosen words not to treat me as an Aunt Sally, but to recognise that I was trying to earn my living, and at the same time endeavouring to give them pleasure.

The rough element of the house gave a cheer, and even went as far as to rebuke the offender. I resumed my song, and to my relief there was hereafter an absence of fruit.

**XXIII.—Mixed Drinks: I sing in the Choir and help at a Fire for the First and Last Time.**

I soon became known in the town as the "warbler," and was approached by the vicar to join the choir. I had never been attracted to choral work, but felt that it might not be politic to refuse. Thus on Sundays I sang hymns and psalms to the accompaniment of a wheezy organ and strident voices.

It has always puzzled me that on this "day of rest" people should find pleasure in congregating together to make hideous noises and be extremely uncomfortable and hot, when they could be more healthfully employed in the open air, which God has been reputed to have created for us.

One evening I was singing a somewhat bloodthirsty song to a crowded house, entitled "Down by the Wongaroo," which is a kind of dirge, sung with great success by Mr. Pellisier, depicting two ferocious individuals of black origin cutting one another's throats over some faithless jade. I don't think the song was going very well, but at the moment when I might have caused some ill-feeling, a coatless individual rushed into the theatre, shouting "Fire!"

There was immediately a stampede; the song was forgotten, the singer was left to

noble solitude. I suddenly realised that I was a fireman. I believe it is usual for a fireman to put out fires. Having come to this momentous conclusion, I took a flying leap from the platform and rushed out into the street. At some distance away the one and only bakery in the town was burning fiercely. I ran to the pumping station, the headquarters of the fire brigade, and found excitable members vainly endeavouring to drag out what might have been, in the time of the Phœnicians, a fire-engine. It consisted of a tank balanced on two wheels. Unfortunately the wheels weren't round. This primitive instrument was propelled by man power, and had to be dragged, pushed, or carried (if possible) to the scene of the outbreak.

A hose about a mile long (I have no accurate figures as to its length) was fixed to the pumping station, and had to be unwound and dragged through the streets, and if the fire did not happen to be at a great distance, it could be used.

I was detailed off to help unwind the hose, and get it into position. By this time the bakery was well alight. We worked furiously. The hose was got out with commendable rapidity. It was fortunate indeed that the bakery was not more than a mile away.

We turned the water on; we waited at

least six minutes for the water. The six minutes soon became ten. Something was obviously wrong. We ran back to the fire station, and to our chagrin we found the water was spraying an inoffensive tobacconist's shop, owing to a hole in the pipe. I was instructed by the perspiring chief to sit on the hole. On occasions like these one does not stop to think. I sat on it and hoped for the best. Unfortunately this is not the accredited way to stop a leaky pipe. I therefore tried, after getting thoroughly wet, to stop it with my fingers. This I effectively did for five minutes, but, alas! I am but human—which the fireman chief seemed to have forgotten in his excitement—and my fingers began to ache. I therefore let go, with the result that 250 packets of cigarettes were completely destroyed. I tried my handkerchief, but to no purpose. I told the nearest fireman that nothing could stop the flow of water. He ran back for instructions, and was told to turn it off.

The bakery was burning more fiercely than ever. I was then told in unrepeatable language that I was a useless kind of idiot, and the best thing I could do was to get hold of two fire-extinguishers and play about with *them*.

In the meantime, amidst loud cheers, the fire-engine was dragged out of the

station, and rolling from side to side like a drunken man, it at last reached the doomed bakery.

Having found the extinguishers I raced to the scene. Here I discovered everything to be in indescribable confusion. Even Harry Tate could have done no better. Men rushed in and out of the burning building waving hatchets; some were throwing loaves through the windows, which were nimbly caught by the crowd, who seemed to be there for no other purpose.

As is the habit in most Western towns, logs of wood were stored by the side of the houses for winter fuel. They are mostly cut in various sizes and piled one on top of the other, and very often reach to the roof.

My quick fireman's instinct enabled me to rapidly grasp the great possibilities of this store as a scaling-ladder. The crowd was mostly sympathetic. They saw me hesitate; they urged me on. They sang "Daddy was a Fireman," "Hell's a jolly fine place to go to," and divers other ballads appertaining to fire. It was most encouraging.

I resolved to make a bold and-heroic effort to reach the roof with my fire-extinguishers, and started gingerly clambering up the logs, but unfortunately had

not realised that my weight might possibly dislodge them. I had only managed to get a third of the distance up, when with a crash I returned to Mother Earth and was entirely invisible to man. I faintly heard the cheering crowd, who, after having thoroughly enjoyed my discomfiture, came to my rescue and dug me out.

It was a miracle that I wasn't very badly hurt. On standing up I was greeted with a howl of laughter. My shirt was torn, my trousers were not what they had been, and my rueful face was a study in futuristic effects. However, I was bound to follow the instincts of duty.

I searched wildly for my extinguisher, and found it under the logs, undamaged. Amid derisive encouragement from the crowd I again attempted to reach the roof. This time I met with success, but unfortunately, on heaving myself on to the roof, I disturbed the remaining logs, and was marooned.

In the meantime the fireman chief had been attracted by the excitement which had been caused, and came to investigate. He asked me what the blinking h—— I was doing on the roof. Did I think I was going to put out the fire with a miserable extinguisher? I had no business to be a fireman! I'd do far better as a monkey-

up-a-stick or an ice-cream merchant. He was in a great rage, but, however angry he was, it was impossible for me to come down. Having realised that it was perfectly useless for him to waste his energy and his already smoke-blurred voice, he left me to think out my own salvation.

During this episode the crowd was airing its views as to my predicament, and suggestions were many and varied; a good number of them were of the opinion that I should not waste the contents of the extinguisher. Some suggested that I should jump, and unfeelingly told me that a broken neck would not matter. Others said it was a pity I had no wings, but if I stayed up there long enough I should get them.

Coming to the conclusion that the first suggestion was the best one, I ignored the last; it nevertheless gave me something to think about.

On examining my extinguisher, and, never having used one in my life, I was at a loss to know what to do with it. I turned a handle, pushed a lever—nothing happened.

In the meantime it was getting uncomfortably hot on the roof, and I believe I heard somebody say that I might fall in. I was getting a little nervous; my courage was at the ebb. I prayed to the good



Lord, and suggested to Him that if He did not put the fire out He'd be the witness of a terrible roasting.

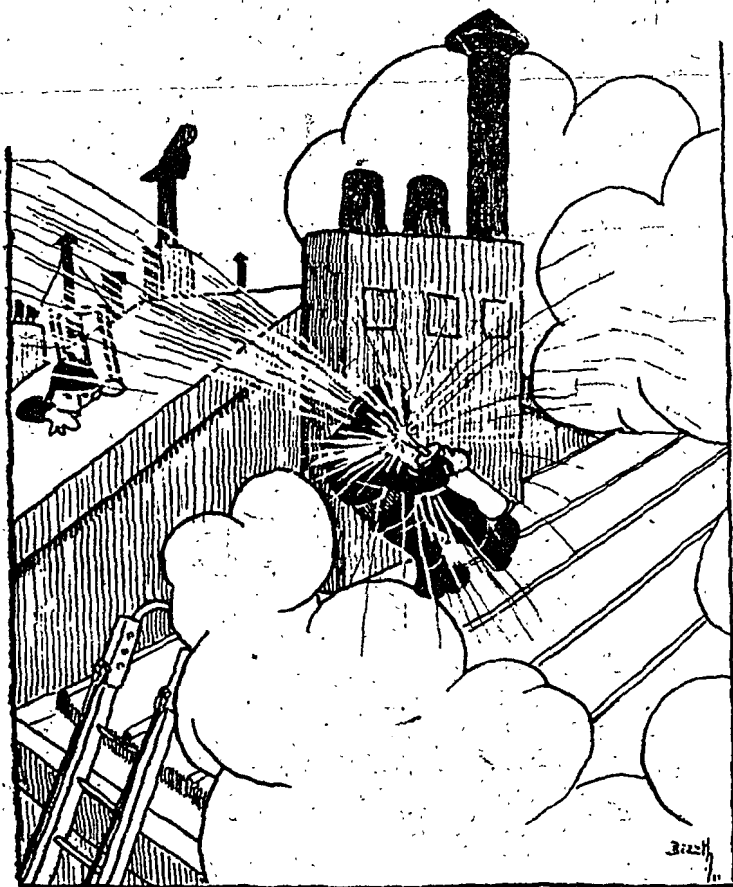
Having tried every conceivable method of getting my extinguisher to work, I turned it upside down. No sooner done than there was a furious hissing sound, and a flood of chemical matter hit me in the neighbourhood of the chest and sat me down hard on the heating roof, and sprayed four-fifths of the crowd. It may not have put the fire out, but it certainly put a stop to any further suggestions.

Unfortunately the section of the crowd that had been lucky enough to escape what should have been on the roof gave way to paroxysms of mirth. This brought the fire chief round again, who said that this was the last blinking fire I would ever attend, and I replied that I was sure of it!

However, I managed to spray the roof, and am firmly convinced that this was instrumental in saving it from being burnt.

After three hours' incessant work the fire was extinguished; cheered to the echo by the crowd, who had patiently stood until the bitter end, the firemen marched off like conquering heroes. It is hard to believe that not one of those furious fire-eaters had given me a thought. I was still on the roof. I shouted, I shrieked, I cursed, but nobody appeared to take the

slightest notice of me. I tried various ways of getting down from my exalted



A FLOOD OF CHEMICAL MATTER HIT ME ON THE CHEST.

position, but the sides of the building were so charred and my wardrobe was so limited that I didn't desire either to ruin my clothes or risk the possibility of breaking my neck. In about an hour's time I heard one of the firemen who lived in the neighbourhood returning; by the varied sounds he emitted I gathered that when he had finished pouring liquid on the bakery he had gone elsewhere to resume his quenching profession.

As he rolled past I attracted his attention; on perceiving me he stared up in blank astonishment. I explained to him that I had been left up on the roof and wanted to get down. He was kind enough to hiccough and say that he would go back and tell the others that there was some salvage work to be done.

He returned a few minutes later with a blanket and four stalwart companions. They spread the blanket out and told me to jump into it. This was more easily said than done, for my friends, although willing, were swaying rather badly, and before I could drop into the blanket I had to mathematically calculate how many degrees left or right it might be to eventually reach it. However, at length success crowned my efforts.

After all there is not much pleasure in being a fireman. I resigned my member-

ship, thus ending my short career in the flame-fighting world.

#### XXIV.—A Gold Rush—my Equestrian Feats and a Bad Freeze.

One morning, according to my custom, while performing my ablutions in the rain-tub, I heard distant shouting which rapidly grew in volume. I peeped over the rain-tub, *vita rustica parsimoniae magistra est*, and perceived the distant town-site to be seething with excitement. The inhabitants were running like distracted rabbits towards the hills.

I hurriedly scrambled out of the rain-tub, firstly, because I had no wish to be discovered in *puris naturalibus*; and secondly, my curiosity was aroused.

There was evidently something untoward afoot, for people in this part of the world are not usually in a hurry, and especially at so early an hour.

I speedily donned my clothes and made straight for Scraggy's restaurant, feeling sure that he would be able to tell me what was happening.

As I neared Scraggy's domain a posse of horsemen passed me, galloping at a furious pace.

Scraggy was on his doorstep, gesticulating wildly, waving his arms and shouting to me to hurry up.

I needed no encouragement. Something serious was the matter. I had never known my good friend to disturb himself over anything, excepting perhaps his dearth of customers.

His face was crimson with excitement. Without taking the trouble to greet me, he blurted out that the boys had discovered gold in the hills.

"It's a gold rush, that's what it is," bellowed Scraggy, his little eyes dancing with excitement.

This meant very little to me. I had read about it in the "Trail of '98," and had come to the opinion that finding gold meant cutting one another's throats, and terrible hardships, with every chance of being robbed of any gold one might happen to get.

"Wall, don't it say nothing to you?" screamed Scraggy in pained surprise, and for the first time really angry.

"What can I do about it?" I replied.

"Do! Do! I guess you've gotter beat it and stake a claim, that's what you've gotter do, and git a d——d hustle on too, or these 'pikers' will get the best of the pick."

"Here, better take a gun in case." He thrust a rusty weapon into my hands, the size of a brass cannon. I fingered it gingerly, as I do not believe I had ever

used a revolver in my life, in any case not such a fearful-looking weapon as the one in my hands.

"It ain't loaded," grinned Scraggy; "don't have to be for these 'guys.'"

I asked him how I was going to get there, as evidently it was some distance away.

"How? A horse, you durned fool! It ain't a bit of use my going. Too fat, and I couldn't stick a broncho."

(I very much doubted if I could.)

"'Ere's some dope, and beat it quick and good." He thrust ten dollars into my hand and pushed me out of the door.

Poor old Scraggy, he was tense with excitement. He no doubt had visions of building a palace with marble halls. Well, well! He ought to have known better. I was sceptical, and never thought I had the remotest chance of finding any gold, not knowing the first word about it.

However, more to please Scraggy than from any personal feelings, I ran off to try and find a horse.

I found one, a grey mare, who eyed me with great disfavour. She no doubt resented being called so early in the morning.

I felt a little chary of mounting her, for I was no expert horseman, and had heard

things concerning these little broncho devils.

However, she seemed quiet enough, and allowed me to swing myself into the Mexican saddle.

These saddles, ridden with long leather stirrups, serve, during great distances, as comfortable armchairs.

We had not proceeded a hundred yards, and were still well in sight of the stable, when this blamed mare took it into her head to prance about like a monsoon-swept steamer.

This manoeuvre took me completely by surprise and nearly swept me from the saddle. I hung on to the pommel like grim death.

The stable-boys (I am sure they knew what was going to happen) started to laugh uproariously, and shouted something to the horse which I couldn't catch. Immediately the wretched animal started to buck like a thing possessed.

Dignity was swept to the winds, but not my resolve to stick on at any cost. My hopes of getting anywhere near the gold-find were meagre.

I embraced the mare's neck with both arms, and found myself in a convenient position to whisper words of love and promise of sugar and carrots if she would keep quiet. The more I whispered the more she bucked.

Feeling sure that I should be violently sick, I let go of her neck to see if this would appease her, but soon found myself admiring her stomach, much to the amusement of those wretched stable-boys.

I scrambled into the saddle again, and, feeling desperate, threw all caution to the breeze and flogged her.

To my surprise the mare, instead of resenting the punishment, shook her head, snorted, and quietly resumed her journey.

I had grave suspicions that, before we started, the stable-boys had whispered to her that I was a greenhorn Englishman.

These equestrian feats had delayed me, for already there had passed me a considerable number of people, who repeatedly shouted "Gold" in an excited manner.

I couldn't imagine what good this did, as it could only attract a greater number of people to the scene of the find. I suppose that many people lose their heads at the possibilities of wealth. They certainly very often lose their lives.

On arriving on the scene of action an extraordinary sight met my gaze.

Groups of men were feverishly hammering stakes into the ground. Shouting and swearing, they seemed to have all gone mad.

They resented the approach of all newcomers, and told them to beat it farther off.



Already most of the best ground had been staked, and I had to content myself with staking a claim at some distance away from the original find.

Most of the men had brought picks and shovels. I had none of these implements with me.

They were digging away furiously and at intervals a great shout would be raised, which was a signal to everybody to leave their claims and crowd round.

A little gold had certainly been discovered, but not sufficient to warrant this ludicrous excitement.

Having pegged a claim and marked it as my property, I scratched about, but found little else than thistles (an excellent omen) and loose stones. There was a little quartz to be seen, slightly coloured, but I used to come across a good deal of this kind of thing in the Welsh mountains when a kid.

I was foolish enough to say this to some of the men, who told me to shut my ugly mouth, and that Englishmen always knew more than any other people.

The whole of the day was spent squatting on my claim without having a mouthful of food.

In the evening I went back to Scraggy, feeling sure he had seen to the registration of it. He had, but was waiting to hear from me as to the exact location.

I told him that in my opinion there was very little in this gold find. He had sobered down a great deal since the morning, and he gloomily agreed with me.

Already a number of men were returning, sharing the same opinion.

The next morning I walked to the claim and took with me a pick and shovel, accompanied by Scraggy.

We worked on it all day, but found nothing to warrant any change in our primary opinion.

On the following day it was known throughout the town that the gold find was a myth.

Poor old Scraggy's castle in the air came down to earth, an earth which provided waffles and steaks, but few customers to eat them.

I think that I felt a little disappointed. It would have been very pleasant to find gold in quantity, and to return home with rings on my fingers and bells on my toes.

However, these happy endings only happen in sixpenny novels, and seldom seem to exist in the rough and tumble of life.

I had already been in Canada a good many months, and so far my pockets seemed to be more empty than the day I set out.

Life seemed to be stripped of all the

pleasant things I had once thought it possessed.

I began to appreciate the simple comforts of my home; the rollicking years spent at the 'Varsity—the ideal period of infancy.

Having chosen to helm my own ship, I was too proud to leave the wheel, and felt that I had to try and steer to more fortunate seas.

For the next two or three days my friend Scraggy was in a very ill-humour. This gold farce had very sorely disappointed him. He talked of returning to the East. He began to pine for the Alps of his native Switzerland, and succeeded in making me very homesick.

He had just sufficient custom to make two ends meet, but this wasn't good enough for him. Another month and he would shake the dust of British Columbia from off his feet. He advised me to do the same.

XXV.—Why not turn Postman?—but 25 Miles out is a Long Stretch.

One morning he greeted me with great hilarity and told me he had found me a job.

This was excellent news, but remembering that my jobs had been somewhat

varied and sometimes not too pleasant, I asked him, with some degree of trepidation, what it was.

"A postman, my boy!"

A postman—well, I hadn't tried that. It didn't sound a very difficult position to tackle.

I thanked him very warmly, tried to express the gratitude I felt for all his kindness, and marvelled at the trouble this little man took on my behalf. He had nothing to gain by it, but simply acted through sheer kindness of heart.

I went over and saw the postmaster, who told me that the regular man was ill, and that I should probably have to take his place for a month. I was overjoyed at this piece of good fortune. A dollar a day for a few weeks was wealth untold.

I started off in the morning. They provided a horse to ride, as the distances were very great. On turning the matter over in my mind, I came to the conclusion that a postman's billet in a spot like F——, which was surrounded by forests, swift-running rivers, a few bad roads, unbeaten tracts, and pre-emptions lying at great distances one from the other, was going to be no sinecure after all.

However, I had a horse, a dollar a day, and unlimited optimism. There is nothing so pleasant as a quiet nag, the feeling of

good leather under you, and a vast country where one doesn't come across a board announcing that "Trespassers will be Prosecuted," or "Keep off this Ground. By Order."

I have often wondered when confronted with "By Order" in my rambles through English counties what "By Order" means, and by whose order, and if one disobeyed the order what could possibly happen. However, I am digressing.

My first day's work was comparatively easy, having only had about half a dozen letters to deliver within a radius of four or five miles. The next day told a very different tale.

I was to deliver a letter addressed to a pre-emption twenty-five miles south of the Kariboo Mountains.

Rather vague, as I hadn't the slightest idea where the Kariboo Mountains were, and thought the man would be very lucky if he ever got his letter. I rode eight miles without a stop; then, getting very hungry dismounted, and according to the custom of the country, left my horse to ramble at his leisure. I sat down and ate my modest meal, which consisted of bread and cheese and a bottle of rye.

On attempting to rise I found to my horror I could scarcely move a yard, owing to my being so saddle-sore. Nothing can

be conceived more painful than this, but I realised that if I was to keep my job I should have to put up with the pain and discomfort and push along.

Looking round for my horse, to my amazement he was nowhere to be seen. It dawned upon me that I hadn't thrown his reins over his head.

It is said that unless you do this with a broncho he will wander off, otherwise he stays quite peacefully near at hand.

Here was a nice dilemma in which to find myself! Another twelve miles at least to cover, and no horse. I whistled and shouted, but to no purpose.

The spot in which I found myself was covered with a very thick and tall undergrowth. I must have covered a mile or more before I came across the beast, which was placidly grazing.

We plodded on for many a weary mile, not daring to trot, for every time I rose and fell on the saddle, I felt like being beaten to death.

At last we came to what I thought might be twenty-five miles south of the Kariboo Mountains, but there wasn't a sign of any habitation.

The best thing to do, under the circumstances, is to give the lead to your horse.

Bronchos are extraordinarily intelligent little animals, even more so, I think, than

the European horse. On the darkest nights, on the worst roads, in the midst of dense forests, they will pick their way without the slightest concern, but the moment you make any attempt to guide them, they will probably break their own necks and yours as well.

How long we wandered I cannot remember, but late in the evening my horse brought me to a log hut of moderate size. It lay in a peaceful clearing.

It was a pleasant picture, and one that I hadn't seen before in Canada. Two or three cows grazed at no great distance from the hut. Chickens pecked and scratched round about.

I knocked at the door, and a woman's voice bade me come in. I shall never forget the pleasant surprise which was mine on entering that lonely Columbian hut.

A pretty-faced woman was seated in the far corner doing some needlework. She greeted me most warmly, and offered me food and drink, as is the custom in this country.

I produced my letter and delivered it. She told me that her husband was working on his land and would be in very shortly.

In lonely places it is not unusual for people to take strangers into their con-

fidence. It is a relief to be able to talk to somebody who comes from the outside world. She told me she was an English-woman, had been on her pre-emption five years, and during that time had only once visited a town.

I marvelled that a pretty woman could possibly have stood that terrible solitude, but she seemed quite happy.

By the time my meal was finished the husband walked in and greeted me effusively, and to my astonishment we discovered that he had been a member of my dormitory in the old school days.

He asked me to stay the night with them, and although I felt I ought to start back so as to reach F—— in the morning, I could not resist the temptation of accepting his invitation.

I left the next morning early, although they would willingly have had me stay with them an unlimited period, but I felt that to remain would entirely cut me off from the world.

On my return to the post-office I found the postmaster in a great state of mind. He wanted to know where I had been, and why I had been such a time delivering my letter.

I explained to him that to a stranger it was very difficult to find one's way, and also had to tell him that I should not be



able to ride a horse for at least a week. He said something about Englishmen being jelly-fish, but that it didn't really matter, as it was quite customary to delay letters for a month or two.

**XXVI.—The Indian Maid, a Passing Romance, whereby I nearly lose my Reputation.**

On one occasion I remember coming across my first romance. I had been out towards the Peace River district when I came across an Indian reservation.

Indians are gradually dying out, and there will come a time when Indians will be as scarce as a grain of radium.

It is a pity; they are a wonderful people, but I do not propose to describe them, for many of you have probably read about them, and there isn't a schoolboy who doesn't know something about a Sioux or a Siwash Indian.

By the side of the trail I discovered an Indian papoose and a strikingly pretty girl. She was about sixteen, but looked possibly eighteen; this is not surprising, as Indians mature at a very early age.

I stopped my horse, smiled, and said, "How do you do"? Although she was perhaps unfamiliar with this "Rotten Row" greeting, she was not at all frightened, and like her Piccadilly sisters, asked

me in astounding English if I had any tobacco. I gave her some, which the little devil promptly began to chew, a perfectly filthy habit for a young lady. I can no more picture Lady Vere de Vere's daughter chewing tobacco in a Mayfair drawing-room than you can imagine her ladyship's daughter being half so pretty (but capable of "chewing the rag") as this young Indian girl.

Lingering in her company for some time, I found her extremely entertaining, and her broken English was most fascinating.

However, I had a long trail to hit, and couldn't waste my time in a mild flirtation with an Indian girl, aged sixteen, and five hundred miles from anywhere. Oh, Mrs. Grundy! What a blessing you weren't born in Canada, where your views on such questions would have materially affected this young lady of the bush!

I bade her good-bye and resumed the trail towards the Peace River.

I had been half-asleep in my saddle for at least two hours, when I heard the snapping of a twig.

In the wilds one soon gets accustomed to the slightest sound. In fact, one's ears get trained to hear noises which probably a European would never notice. The snapping of that twig meant a possible

danger. Looking round, to my astonishment, what should I discover but the little Indian girl.

I stopped my horse and asked her what she was doing, as she must have run many miles to catch up with me. She made me understand, with the English the little hussy had at her command, that I was far better than any brave there was, in her camp, and that she loved the white chief.

Now it is not the first time—and may I blush for my lack of modesty—that a young woman has proposed to me. This indiscretion has sometimes been committed behind a friendly screen at a dance, or in a moonlit garden behind some sheltering hedge; and I may even go so far as to say on the top of a deserted 'bus during a heavy shower, but never have I been proposed to in practically an untrodden country, one hundred and fifty miles from the nearest railway-station, and goodness knows how many miles distant from the nearest house.

It was quite natural that I was very much taken aback. The little minx, without asking my permission, and without giving me any warning, jumped behind me on to my horse. I felt certain that this little Sioux Indian had never heard of Gretna Green, but her action shows that in every human (female) mind, there is

something at the back of it equivalent to the idea of our much-vaunted Gretna Green, its facilities and possibilities.

I asked her to get down, told her she could not possibly come with me and must return at once, or the white chief would be very angry. I might as well have spoken to the nearest tree-trunk ; she refused to budge an inch.

What an embarrassing position ! Here was I amidst a wild and tangled country with a young woman who refused to leave me.

But this was not the worst aspect of the case, as I fully realised that her Indian parents would imagine the worst, and it would be indeed difficult to convince them of the best. I imagined myself accused of abduction, bound to a tree, with a circle of shrieking Indians, who, after having tortured me to their hearts' content, would probably scalp and then roast me.

I think my reader will agree that no Indian girl, or for the matter of that, no girl of any description, is worth the possible predicament which I have described.

Having realised that nothing would persuade my would-be fiancée to go, there was no alternative but to put as much distance as possible between ourselves and the Indian camp ; I therefore set "spurs to my horse," and galloped away, as though the devil were at my heels.

Although it cannot be said that I have never been a ladies' man, I always contend for certain principles with regard to their very charming sex, and was much embarrassed to know what to do with her when the time came for me to seek my night's repose.

Ordinarily, I had been in the habit of using my faithful old steed as a pillow, for by this time we had become the firmest of friends, and he would invariably stretch himself out and allow me to use his stomach as a rest for my head, but I very much doubted whether he would condescend to support two heads instead of one. I inwardly cursed this wretched girl, and wished with all my heart that the sight of her pretty face had not tempted me to speak to her.

Feeling sure that the news of my venture would reach F——, I dreaded the chaff, or perhaps the opposite, that might greet my return.

*"Fama malum quo non aliud velocius ullum."*

Another weighty consideration was the matter of food. I only just had enough "grub-stake" to last me until my destination was reached, where I hoped to be able to collect sufficient for my return journey.

However, I always carried a Winchester in case I did run short, and it looked to me

as though I should have to resort to the primitive method of hunting for my food, before eating it.

As soon as the sun went down, I looked for a spot suitable for a camping place. In the wilds it is always advisable, when one is about to camp for the night, to choose a place at no great distance from water; and so I halted by the side of a small brook, and gave the girl to understand that it was here that we should pass the night. If I thought she would show any embarrassment like my own, I was sadly mistaken. She merely beamed and danced about in great delight. A nice young woman!

She collected sticks and built a fire. Most Indians can teach us more than we shall ever know on such matters.

We shared the meal together, and she smoked my pipe. Most Indians exchange pipes with strangers as a mark of peace and goodwill.

During our after-dinner smoke, this primitive damsel tried to show, more by demonstration than by words, that she possessed for me an undying devotion. My reader may be somewhat sceptical when he is told that I rebuked these advances, nor is he to be blamed, and I am frank enough to admit that had she been other than a foolish young Indian girl I

might have submitted to her tender allurements; but the Indian laws are very rigorous, and should an Indian girl compromise herself with a white man, it is the invariable rule that she is banished from her tribe and treated as an outcast by the whole of its members.

I explained to this rueful maiden that I slept with my horse, and that she should make a bed for herself; but she would not hear of it, and refused to sleep anywhere else but where I slept.

My horse, as it happened, did not find any objection in turning himself into a double bed.

Fortunately open-air life is conducive to sound and undisturbed sleep, and the night passed without further incident.

I reached my destination on the following afternoon.

The man to whom I delivered my letters was amazed to find me accompanied by an Indian girl, but having explained to him the circumstances, he advised me to leave the girl with him, and he would see that she returned to her family.

The girl's grief on my departure was sincere, and I must say that I did not leave her without a pang.

This was my first and last adventure with the opposite sex during my sojourn in Canada.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the end of the month I relinquished my post to its rightful owner, who was now well enough to resume his duties.

This perhaps had been the most pleasant occupation which had fallen to my lot since landing. The life of freedom, the wanderings in wild and untrodden corners, had been a new and most refreshing experience.

I was heartbroken at having to part with my horse. He had been such a faithful companion that I felt I should never really meet again with such sympathy or understanding, as that which this dumb and noble animal had extended to me.

However, it is an old adage, but nevertheless a true one, which says "the best of friends must part," and so I stroked his coat, his dear wet nose, and looked in his soft brown eyes and bade him a very broken good-bye.

I am sure that old nag felt the parting as keenly as I did, for as I turned to go he neighed and pawed the ground as if to say: "Please don't leave me!"

XXVII.—I turn Cook, laboured and was belaboured.

In the meantime things weren't panning out too well with my old friend Scraggy. He looked a little thinner and more worried



than when I last saw him. We hadn't seen much of each other during my wanderings as a postman, and he was delighted to have me back.

He said he had been wanting to see me for the last two or three days, as he had recommended me for the post of cook to a small mining syndicate which was going out to prospect the hills a few miles away from the town.

I laughed heartily at the thought of my being recommended as a cook, and told him I didn't know anything about cooking, except that I had a very good idea as to how to make Irish stew. Scraggy told me not to be a fool, or tell them I didn't know anything about it, otherwise I should lose forty dollars a month and board.

He suggested that until they were ready to start he should give me a few crude lessons as to how to cook sufficiently for their wants.

For the next three days I was busy concocting the most dreadful dishes and the most appalling odours.

In about a week's time the syndicate, consisting of a German, a burly, evil-looking fellow; and a Canadian, together with three Swedes, two Norwegians and a Dane, were ready to start out.

We took with us enough dynamite to

blow up the Bank of England, a sufficient number of drills to reach the earth's centre, and enough food to stock a regiment of soldiers, not to mention two enormous tents, a cauldron, a stove, blankets, straw, hatchets, and a quantity of logs of all kinds, shapes and sizes.

Within the first hour of my making my acquaintance with this odd assortment of humanity, I realised that I was not only going to cook, but, being an Englishman, was going to be used as a maid-of-all-work.

If it hadn't been for the fact that declining the post meant starvation, or at any rate, living on the hospitality of good friend Scraggy, I should never have undertaken this new venture.

There wasn't a man in the whole bunch who didn't look a hardened villain. They were men who had lived from hand to mouth from their youth up. They were used to hardships, and had never known anything but the rougher side of life.

It is true that I had got more or less used to all sorts and conditions, but I must admit that I hadn't yet made any acquaintance with this class. I was the only Englishman, and necessarily the butt of their coarseness and their cruelty.

My first night was a perfect nightmare ; being chivied about from pillar to post,

and although a fairly strong boy, weighing thirteen stone, and one who could creditably use his fists if the occasion demanded, I hadn't the slightest chance with these brutes.

The German and the Canadian were the aristocrats of the party. They slept in a huge tent by themselves. The rest shared the other large tent, and I slept amongst the pots and pans.

I arose at four o'clock in the morning and prepared the men's breakfast, which consisted of Irish stew or steaks, and sometimes eggs and bacon and potatoes. They ate like hogs, but I suppose this can be understood, for drilling in a rocky hillside is exceedingly hard work.

I waited upon them, and, when they had had sufficient, I then could help myself to what was left. When not quick enough in perceiving a man's wants, I got a tin or something else handy thrown at me.

One morning, having done my level best to serve them quickly and please them in every way, the Dane, a coarse, brutal fellow, without the slightest provocation, shoved his elbow into my stomach, which so infuriated me that I jammed the hot potato saucepan full of potatoes on his bullet head. This was the sign for an uproar. The maddened Dane

lashed out at me; I dodged and retaliated with a well-timed left which caught him underneath his jaw, and he fell with a resounding crash across the breakfast-table.

The remainder made a dash for me, but I picked up a heavy saucepan and threatened to brain the first man who came within my reach. I was in such a fury that they thought me quite capable of it, and attempted no further mischief.

I must have given the Dane a pretty good punch, for it took him some minutes before he realised that he was in British Columbia. He said nothing, but the look he gave me betokened no good in the future.

In fact, he asked the Canadian if I could not take his place that morning in the blasting operations, as he did not feel equal to it.

I felt this to be a strange request, for, although I might possibly have shaken the man up, he was too powerful a fellow to feel the effects of it long.

However, I mentally vowed that I would keep my weather eye skinned, and myself ~~not~~ too near the dynamite.

On arriving at the side of the hill I was told that I was to light the fuse. I quite appreciated the gravity of my position, but dared not refuse their request, for by so

doing I jeopardised any chances of escape open to me if I acquiesced and used my own initiative and intelligence.

It was the first blasting that nearly lost me my life. They had told me that I could light the fuse, but having an idea that there was some kind of devilment afoot, I had a good look round before putting a match to it. Immediately behind me I had noticed a massive boulder, and having lit the fuse, I rushed and got behind it. Not a moment too soon, for with a blinding flash and a terrific detonation the dynamite exploded, and a mass of rock and soil rained about me, but thanks to my timely action I was well protected by the boulder.

These devils had timed that fuse to give me only a bare minute to seek safety, and had it not been for that God-sent boulder, I should probably have been killed by the fall of stone.

I think these men must have realised what they had done, for they were very subdued when I served them their evening meal, and left me in peace.

The next day the Dane returned to work, and I was put to making a road from the camp to a brook about half a mile distant, which was our only water supply.

To make a road in such a country is the most difficult task. It consists of clear-

ing away thick undergrowth and cutting down trees; for in this part of the world the trees grow very closely together.

At the end of the day I was so dog-tired that it was all I could do to stop myself from falling into the soup cauldron.

One afternoon, the men being all out of camp (they had gone to the town site for a little relaxation, which meant getting blind drunk), I was left in sole charge.

I had been specially recommended to take great care of a magnificent quarter of ham which the men were to enjoy for breakfast the next morning.

Having noticed at home that our old cook always hung any meat that she had, I decided the best thing to do was to hang the ham outside the tent.

It being a particularly warm afternoon, and knowing the men would not return till late, I thought I would have the luxury of a well-earned nap. It was very rarely that I had a moment to call my own.

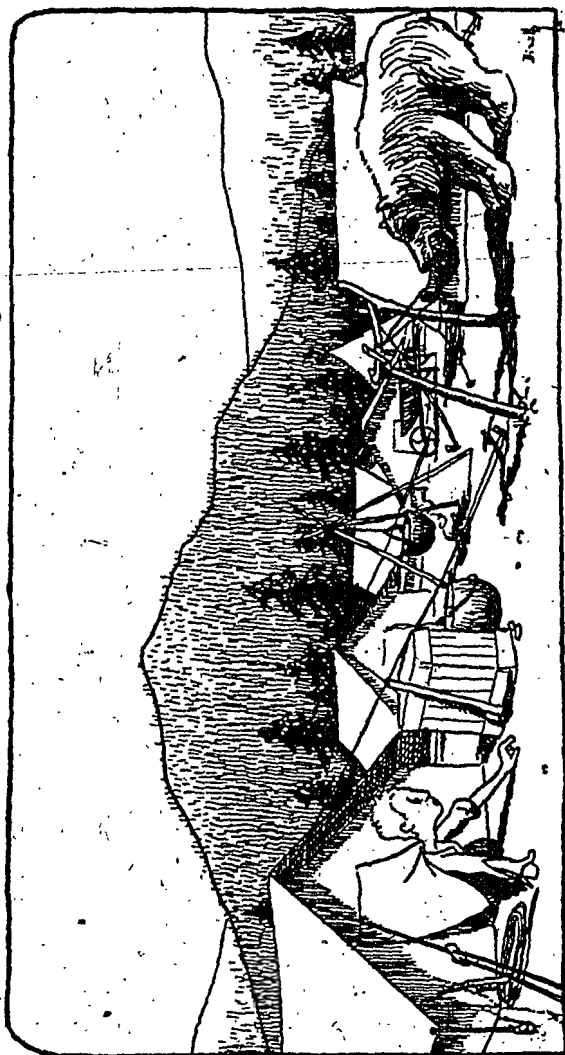
I'd never worked so hard in my life, and never had I felt so unutterably miserable and insecure. The picture of my home and its comforts, my mother's sweet face, and the hundred and one things that make life so pleasant, were constantly before me. They were like lantern-slides graven on my mind. I am not a bit ashamed to confess that on more than one

occasion when alone I shed a tear or two. After all, I was only nineteen, and had never before come up against this kind of life, and suppose that I had been rather spoilt and, more or less, always had my own way. I had never worked—that is, really worked; and to suddenly find myself worse than a menial, and more like a cur, which when it is seen is kicked and told to lie down, it is not surprising that I gave vent to most natural and heartfelt emotions.

How long I slept, I cannot remember, but was wakened by a presentiment that something or someone was in the camp. I rubbed my eyes, looked round, and to my amazement and horror discovered what I had never yet seen anywhere but in the Zoological Gardens, a big brown bear.

I do not think I am a coward, for I'll stand up to any man, but to be face to face with something which one has never seen except in captivity, and something which one knows very little about, is warranted, in my opinion, to put the fear of God in most of us; at any rate, whether it be so or not, I felt the hair of my head stand up as stiff as a poker, and my spine turn to a block of ice.

I had no gun, and anything with which I could defend myself was far out of my



I DISCOVERED A BIG BROWN BEAR.



reach. I had heard of the huge Kodiak bear (*U.a.m. iddenorffi*) of Kodiak Island; the Alaskan Peninsular bear (*U.a. gyas*), and also the gigantic Yakutat bear (*U.a. dalli*) from the neighbourhood of Yakutat Bay, and also of the Sitka bear (*U.a. sitkensis*) of Sitka and Baronoff Island, and the Kidder's bear (*U.a. seminari*) of the Alaskan Peninsula; but I must confess, however, I was more familiar with the Teddy Bear (*U. in nursery*); all the same I felt quite certain in my own mind (so far as it was capable of working) that this was not one of them, so I came to the conclusion that it must be the grizzly bear (*Urtus 'orribly*), which is, I believe, to be recognised by its white claws.

It is usually to be found in the high forests of the Rocky Mountains, but I suppose this charming and uninvited guest must have wandered away from his usual lair for the express purpose of paying me a visit. However, I soon discovered that he wasn't in the slightest degree interested in me; it was the ham. He sniffed around, growled in the most threatening manner, which nearly sent me into convulsions, suddenly espied the reason of his visit, drew himself up to his full height. (He was a mighty big bear, which reminded me of the story of the sailor who found himself in a forest, face to face with such a bear, and who, having never prayed in

his life before, got down on his knees and petitioned the Lord in the following manner: "Oh, dear Lord, if there's got to be a fight between this 'ere bear and meself, it must be so. But if You don't want to see the bloodiest fight You ever see in Your life, for Your sake don't let that bear win.") He extended his mighty paw, grasped the ham, and quicker than I could conceive it possible, was lost to sight in the undergrowth.

Here was a pretty predicament! I dared not think of what the men would say on returning, when they found their breakfast had wandered off into the unknown wilds to be eaten by *Ursa arctus*.

At about eleven I heard the strains of ribald revelry; it was the return of the miners. They were drunk, just as I thought they would be. They tumbled into the tent, too drunk to recognise the poor wretched menial in the shape of myself, too drunk to relieve themselves of their loutish footgear, and, thank God, too drunk to speak to me.

I felt this to be a respite, for I felt certain that their wrath on the discovery of the departed ham would fall upon my head, ere the sun had tinged the hillside with colour. And I was not mistaken. Great was the fall thereof.

The next morning at breakfast-time I

was asked where the ham was. I replied as dramatically as possible that during their absence a beastly bear of abnormal size had visited the camp intent on plunder (I said this in truly Martin Harvey style—a far, far better thing than I had ever done), and had carried away the ham.

If Bedlam had been let loose it would have fitly described the pandemonium which reigned on the receipt of my information.

Without further ado they took off their belts and proceeded to leather me until the Canadian, disturbed by the noise, came round and stopped them.

I will not detail the suffering I went through, but for three days I was incapable of work. My condition frightened the men, who thought, perhaps, that I might return to the town-site and make it warm for them, but I didn't do this, as, firstly, I had no wish to play the sneak, and secondly, I didn't think it would have been much good.

At any rate, they ceased to molest me again from that day.

#### XXVIII.—Scraggy surprises me.

Physical suffering is at the best of times extremely unpleasant, but when one is far from home it is doubly so.

I remember quite well the few tannings

that my mother administered to me in my young days, and unpleasant as these were, they were always mitigated by the sweet sympathy of my father.

Here, in the wilds, there was nothing else to do but to squat on my aching hams (a proper retribution perhaps) and fume at the indignity of my chastisement, and the crassly egotistical action of the *Ursa arctus*.

I blamed the men for their brutality, but reflected that to lose a scarce and succulent ham, in such a godless hole as this, was sufficient to raise the ire of any man.

One might imagine that I was a philosopher, or that I was prone to stoical reflections . . . not a bit of it! Having no redress, I had to find some manner of an excuse for the indignity under which I was smarting; so thus I reasoned, vowing that the next time I was left alone I would be armed to the teeth; but the faith of the men was shattered, and I was never again left as solitary custodian of the camp.

I felt this to be an even greater indignity; gone, too, were my chances of punishing that insolent bear.

The process of cooking Irish stew and peeling potatoes was most painful, and continued to be so for the next few days.

As soon as well enough to resume more arduous labours, I was sent to the town with as many drills as I could carry to get them re-sharpened.

They looked to me more like crowbars, but whatever they were, they weighed a good few pounds, and by the time I had covered half the distance (the town being five miles away and the going very heavy) they weighed a good many tons.

Leaving them at the smithy, I paid a visit to my old friend Scraggy.

To my surprise the restaurant was empty. Greasy plates still remained upon the dirty counter. This was very unusual, as Scraggy took a great pride in the cleanliness of his gastronomic quarters.

I called him, but received no answer. I searched the shop with the dread that I might find him dead or murdered. It was so unlike him to leave his shop at that particular hour of the day.

Having searched every conceivable hole and quarter of his modest establishment without finding any trace of him, I sat down and helped myself to a cut of cold beef and a slice of bread, feeling sure he could be at no great distance, otherwise he would have locked the door.

I had not been eating long when I heard strange sounds which seemed to come from under the counter. There were dis-

tinct noises of somebody singing, and the voice was suspiciously like that of friend Scraggy.

The song was not a repeatable one, and it sounded very much to me as though the singer had no little difficulty in sorting his words from his hiccoughs.

I was somewhat mystified. Scraggy in a ribald mood was something new to me.

He wasn't alone in what seemed to me to be a Bacchanalian orgy, for at the termination of his effort he was joined in the chorus by the most raucous clamour I have ever heard.

The end of the song was greeted with loud and prolonged cheers, accompanied by varied vulgarisms and profuse profanity.

I felt sure that Scraggy's Scotch friend and neighbour was responsible for this entertainment, helped by a varied assortment of liquid refreshment. Sound and the smell of whisky in this country do not take long to travel. This is not to be confounded with the "Call of the West."

Having finished my meal I determined to investigate this "lay out."

It was difficult to know exactly what trade or profession this Scotsman of remote and doubtful ancestry practised.

He called himself an agent. An agent may be anything from a burglar to a wine

merchant. One can quite well be an agent in crime, or an agent for pianos, picture postcards, or perambulators.

In what respect our friend McDougal was an agent I never ascertained and very much doubt whether anybody else did.

On this particular day he seemed to have been an alcoholic agent.

His office consisted of one fair-sized wooden room which was entered by a large and important double door. On the door was printed "McDougal, Agent. The only one this side of Medicine Hat. Real Live Wire. No Fore-flushing or Shooting the Bull." Descriptive, to say the least of it, but as information decidedly vague.

This office made shift as bedroom, parlour, consulting-room, kitchen, bathroom and dining-room.

The furniture consisted of a rickety table which served as a desk and dining-table combined; two chairs, a couple of Dewar's whisky cases for guests or clients who were not lucky enough to get the chairs, and a tin bath.

There were no signs of a bed, for the simple reason that there wasn't one. A few Hudson Bay blankets and a pillow was all this hardy Scotsman needed for his repose. These were neatly folded in a corner. In an opposite corner an odd

assortment of china lay scattered about. One solitary mat, the size of a pin-cushion, adorned the centre of the floor.

On entering this weird and somewhat crude habitation (although perhaps mine was even more primitive, nor did it even boast of being an office), I discovered the truant Scraggy. One glance sufficed to convince me that my worthy friend was "non compos mentis," "blind, blotto, jagged, ginned to the last bottle in heaven," or whatever you like to call it; in other words, "as drunk as a lord!"

His fat little body was precariously perched on the edge of the table, his legs swinging wildly this way and that. He held a bottle of rye whisky to his lips.

McDougal lay stretched upon his back, also the proud possessor of a bottle of "fire-water." In various attitudes of drunken nonchalance reposed three other gentlemen, likewise possessing bottles.

Scraggy was the first to notice me and greeted me with touching affection; so touching indeed that his head hit the floor with a resounding smack.

However, it is a well-known fact that men "on a bat" never hurt themselves, and Scraggy proved no exception to the rule. He picked himself up with slow precision, his whisky bottle still in his hand and undamaged, and swaying like a scenic railway, took his unsteady position



in the centre of the room and addressed the company thus:—

“Shweet (hic) frhiefs, ginks (hic), mutts, I’m jusht tickled to death thath my old pard Lofty (hic) has joined us on this aush (hic) ash—aushpicious occasion.”—(Loud and boisterous cries of “Hear, hear,” from the remainder, only one of whom I knew, and he was McDougal.) “I thought that this mutt of a Britisher (hic)” (here a little time was wasted in my picking the speaker from the floor, where he was trying to give us a swimming entertainment) “was doing his noble damndest to kill off the crazy (hic) miners over the hills yonder.” (The speaker’s effort to paint a romantic picture by waving his arms about, so as to indicate the contours of it, brought him to instant grief, for he overbalanced, and again bit the boards and effectively sprayed us with whisky. However, quite undisconcerted he picked himself up and continued.) “As I said before, this crazy mutt of a Britisher is (hic) doing all he can durn well do to pisen those crazy mutts by cooking them Irish stew. Who taught him? I did—Scraggy; and now ’e ’as come to—(hic)—to say good-bye to his old pard, the stew teacher, what taught ’im.

“I’m going, boys—(hic); I’ve had enough of this G—d d——d country. There isn’t

a red cent, dime, or a nickel to be made out of it (hic). I'm off to Swisherland, Swisherland, where them blinking mountains are . . . and the cows and . . . chickens . . .

Here Scraggy's voice trailed off to silence; he sat down heavily on the floor and joined the others, who were all in a deep and troubled slumber.

So my old friend Scraggy was going; hence this farewell party. When and how he proposed to go, he didn't tell me.

This was the last I saw of my friend and kind Samaritan. I have met many worse fellows in a London drawing-room, and will no doubt meet many more. Although he professed no particular religion, he was a far better Christian than many a man who has preached on the subject. Anything but perfect; yet he possessed the great qualities of kindness of heart and generosity of mind, and would have shared his last crust without the slightest thought of reward.

I plodded wearily and sadly back to the camp with the feeling that I had lost the only friend I had in the length and breadth of British Columbia.

#### XXIX.—Rumours of War.

Camp life, the monotony of Irish stew and potatoes, continued. Day after day I did the same things, heard the same

conversations, which consisted of mines and mythical wealth.

I became sick of the sight of Nestlé's milk, greasy bacon, canned meat and carrots.

Then suddenly there drifted into the camp the rumours of war. The Balkan bubble had been pricked.

Our friend the German asserted that England knew better than to try and pit herself against the might of Germany. The rest of the company seemed to agree with him.

I became the butt of many insults, threats and vituperation. Not one of these men seemed to have the slightest use for England, and even went so far as to say that if there was war they hoped we should get licked.

"You Britishers," the Canadian was holding forth one evening, "are a lot of 'fore-flushers,' continually 'shooting the bull' and considerin' yerselves a mighty sight better than anybody else. Yer wants taking down a bit!"

I thought it little use to contradict him, doing so would have wasted my breath, and given him perhaps immense joy by showing that his words annoyed me. I maintained a dignified silence, and scored more in this manner than if I had suddenly burst forth in indignant protestations.

My net fortune consisted of forty

dollars. The outlook was as bad as it could be. My good friend Scraggy had gone, and the little restaurant wore a dismal and barricaded outlook. Waffles and fried steaks were things of the past.

Fortunately I had another good friend in the chemist, and to him poured forth my woes. He immediately offered to give me a few cents per day if I were willing to keep his store.

I jumped at the suggestion, for this would enable me to keep my forty dollars until such time when I might have to depart and seek my fortunes farther afield.

It was my habit to spend most of my time in the shop, and I soon learned the mysteries (if there were any) of Gregory powders and Litmus papers.

Sometimes MacTavish (nearly all the people in this part of the world were Scots) left me in charge of his shop, and usually when he strolled across to the bar to get a drink.

I dare not think of the number of persons I may have poisoned, but in British Columbia people are not over particular.

### XXX.—Hell in a Hill Station.

The life was very dull, but 'twas heaven in comparison to my mining experiences. One evening, feeling that youth must

find relaxation, I paid a visit to a "Hill Station," accompanied by a friend of mine.

To describe a "Hill Station" requires much discretion, and it is my hope that the reader has sufficient imagination to understand such passages which I have not thought fit to chronicle.

These places are meant for those who wish to spend a few cheerful and quiet hours in the company of ladies.

As can be gathered from this narrative, women were not plentiful in this part of the world, and indeed it was possible to see no signs of the charming sex for weeks together.

In other words, a Hill Station was a kind of cabaret where one drank execrable champagne sold at extortionate prices, hobnobbed with women who were at one time virtuous, and danced if one felt inclined.

They were iniquitous dens, filled to the garrets with vice; but humanity is a strange problem, and it is not for me to discourse upon its many and varied psychological aspects.

Lumber-jacks, cowboys, miners and railroad men who had worked for weeks and had saved money would pay these stations a flying visit, and squander every penny they had earned in less time than it takes to tell of it.

The women were well practised in the art of filling empty glasses, and wheedling for more when the bottles were "dead."

It was a veritable trap for most men, but a funeral for such as myself, who had not even experience as a leaning post.

The ladies who kept these places were, for the most part, soulless harpies, who were there to make money in as short a time as possible, in order to retire on their ill-gotten gains.

Many of these made fortunes, emigrated to some city, and ended their lives in great respectability.

On this particular night "the den" was filled to overflowing with "Dagos" and a sprinkling of lumber-jacks.

The fun was fast and furious amidst a constant popping of corks, shrieks from mock-modest women, who objected to being embraced by "husky ginks" who had forgotten the time when they had applied soap and razor, and the blatant discords of an "upright" which was being drummed to death by a drunken nigger.

I remember certain night clubs in London which were little better, and had not the excuse of Western crudity.

My friend and I sat in a retired corner so as not to attract attention, and to escape, if possible, a champagne orgy. We escaped with a bottle of bad "rye."

The trouble burst upon us as suddenly as a storm in the Pacific.

A drunken lumber-jack, who had apparently been making advances to a certain dance girl, who seemed to be the temporary property of a swarthy product of the South, or was thought to be so, roused the gentleman's jealous passion.

In a flash a knife with a nasty long and tapering blade hurtled through the smoke-thick air, missed the lumber-jack by the thickness of his scarf, and buried itself into the wood partition on our near left.

I shall never forget the impression which this little weapon made upon me as it quivered in that wood. I shuddered to think of the neat little hole it would have made in its intended victim.

The lumber-jack, drunk and heavy as he was, bounded to his feet like a streak of lightning, grasped the murderous dog by the middle, lifted him over his head, and threw him amongst his companions.

This was a signal for a general uproar. Tables, chairs, bottles and knives rained about the room like confetti.

We were reluctantly drawn into the *mêlée* merely for defensive measures, but the blood of man warms when fighting is to the fore, and very soon we were hitting out right and left.

Many a man went down, and even the women were not exempt; for they fought

like fiends, and proved themselves veritable furies and more dangerous than the men.

A woman who went by the name of "Slick Chick," a tall and wild-looking person of no particular nationality, fixed her teeth in a man's arm, and would not let go until someone hit her over the head with a champagne bottle.

Having sustained one or two minor injuries, we soon sickened of the fray, and finding ourselves at the moment near the door, we took advantage of this easy way of escape from further mischief, and darted out unnoticed by the battling crowd.

We ran most of the way back, and were thankful to be able to escape so easily.

How it ended I do not know, nor did I ever hear.

There was one thing of which I was quite certain: that I infinitely preferred my modest chemist shop, and the lack of excitement and feminine society, to the glamour and "mild" entertainment of a "Hill Station."

**XXXI.—War is declared and I start fighting the Hun at once.**

One day, as we sat talking in the little back-parlour, a travel-stained individual entered the shop and asked for a pick-me-up.



He had come from Soda Creek and told us there was considerable excitement there. It was rumoured that the Germans were mobilising.

We were not altogether ignorant of the situation, but this was indeed news to us. The traveller was pessimistic. MacTavish's pick-me-up didn't seem to have done him any good; he felt sure that within a few weeks we should be in the throes of a European War. MacTavish offered him a stronger one; he accepted, but said it wouldn't alter his opinion, and that if he wasn't right he would eat his hat—which was a felt one!

MacTavish told him he was talking through it, and said that he had no business to order a pick-me-up; a calming draught was better for his type of trouble.

Our dust-covered friend seemed a little hurt, but answered nothing and strolled out, but I heard him mutter that we were an ignorant lot of devils.

Our pessimist having gone, MacTavish jumped to the telephone (he possessed one of the few of which F—— could boast) and rang up the nearest town.

The news was corroborated, and to our amazement and consternation we were told that Germany had invaded Belgium and France.

This was indeed serious news, and it

completely knocked the wind out of our sails. In fact, for some moments we stared at one another in an amazed silence; then MacTavish suddenly jumped up, knocking over half a dozen bottles of ipecacuanha wine, and striking a dramatic attitude, he burst out into the wildest vituperations against Germany.

Although I fully realised the serious nature of the oncoming drama, I couldn't help laughing at the antics of this red-headed little Scotsman.

The news had already spread, for we heard shouting and a general clamour of excitement. MacTavish, who was an intelligent and practical person, immediately 'phoned his friend, who happened to be the operator, at a post-office some miles distant, and asked to be kept accurately posted as to the progress of hostilities; thus late in the evening he was sticking bulletins in his shop-window.

We remained rooted to the telephone until far into the night, and with every ring the seriousness of the position became more apparent.

Then came the momentous day of England's declaration of war and the King's Proclamation.

On that little far-off Western town the news fell like a bombshell; to some it came as a relief, for it meant the prospect

of work ; to others it foreshadowed devastation, sorrow and death.

For two days I lived as one in a dream, nor could I grasp the fact that such a thing as a European war was possible. Slowly I realised that it would make a considerable change in my destiny, not to mention the destinies of others.

It was quite evident that my wanderings in Canada would shortly come to a close ; in fact, it was my duty to reach the coast as soon as possible, but how, was a question which puzzled me not a little.

The state of my finances, the length of the journey, the hundred and one difficulties which I should have to overcome, gave me a great deal to think about.

Lying in my bed staring at the stars which flickered and shimmered through the cracks of my primitive ceiling, I came to the conclusion that I could now possibly write to my father and ask him for help ; but decided that there was yet a possibility for me to reach the coast unaided, and that if I got back by Christmas, there would be time enough for me to offer my services to my country.

How to get out of F—— was the first and most important question, and the incident I am about to relate made me more keen to do so.

Along with a bunch of other men, I was

craning my neck on the morning of the following day trying to get a better view of MacTavish's bulletin, when a German, a nasty bullet-headed product of his country, elbowed me aside with scant ceremony, and vouchsafed the remark that that was the probable way we should all be treated for daring to vilify his illustrious Ruler's name.

Although I am more or less of a peaceable and law-abiding disposition, I suddenly "saw red" and flicked this "Germ-Hun" in the neighbourhood of his right ear, and amid the diversion which this attack caused, shouted at him that he and the whole of his tribe were the last asses in hell.

In a twinkling we were all arms and legs, rolling up and down the dirty street; we scratched and bit and cursed, much to the delight of an ever-growing crowd. Some yelled for good old Britain, and some, I regret to relate, shouted "Gott mit uns."

Fortunately, or unfortunately, this spectacle was soon brought to an end by the advent of the town policeman, the only one within miles, six feet four high and about as broad as he was long, who swooped down upon us like some bird of prey, and catching us both unceremoniously by the scruff of our respective necks,

marched us off to the town gaol, which consisted simply of a log hut with a stout door, two windows strongly barred, and no flooring, the interior bare as a new-born babe.

This abrupt termination to an epic combat caused a roar of laughter from the crowd.

To put a climax to the indignity of my position (for I felt that the German, an enemy of my country, should have been summarily dealt with), we were both flung into the same said gaol together, and told to stay there until further notice.

Although my position was anything but an enviable one, I could not repress a laugh.

I have heard an optimist described as a man who, when he is born bow-legged, thanks God he isn't cross-eyed. I thanked the Lord that, although I was in prison with my arch-enemy, I should have the satisfaction of resuming the engagement which had been so rudely interrupted. The first thing to be done was to get accustomed to the dim light, for the windows were not much bigger than a steamer's porthole. For two hours we sat tight on the hard dry ground, covered with crawling beasts, and eyed one another in baleful silence.

Neither of us wanted to be the first to

reopen hostilities, and there is no knowing how long we should have lasted thus.

We looked like two cats who find themselves on one roof, and are content to swish their tails and glare at one another in feline misunderstanding.

Fortunately this trying state of affairs was interrupted by our captor, who came in and deposited a jug of water and a loaf of bread, to do with them what we would.

Here was a unique opportunity to discover who was the stronger of the two. One of us was going to go short, and I was certain that it wasn't going to be yours very truly. The Hun was probably thinking in much the same manner.

Suddenly with a growl (we had almost returned to the primitive) we made a simultaneous dash for the food. But I was lucky, for I was just a foot behind him, and I tackled him in my best "Rugby style" round the knees and brought him to earth.

My truculent companion having bitten the dust, apparently came to the conclusion that "discretion (and part of a meal) was the better part of valour," and having routed the enemy, I was quite amenable to coming to terms, and offered him half the loaf and a fair share of the water in return for an honourable peace and quiet until such time as we were released.

He surrendered unconditionally, and for the next two days we preserved an eloquent and dignified silence.

It is difficult to describe the state of my mind during this period of captivity. I can well imagine the terrible punishment it must be to be condemned to many months of imprisonment, especially to a man of education.

I felt as if I could kick everything within my reach. I wanted to hammer the walls down with my fists. I experienced the most miserable feeling of utter helplessness and loneliness. My companion in misfortune seemed to take it all as a matter of course, and slept most of the time, which made me arrive at the conclusion that this was not a new experience for *him* at any rate. He rather annoyed me with his stoical indifference. I refrained from speaking as I felt tempted to call him every name under the sun. It would have been a great relief. I thought of all the poor miserable mortals who had suffered confinement in the past, and looked around for some four-legged animal that I might possibly train, should my captivity last long enough.

I cannot attempt to imagine what would have been the state of my nerves if this situation had been prolonged; mercifully on the third day of our internment our

long-legged custodian of the peace visited us at an early hour and told us we could "beat it."

Always will be engraven on my mind the joy and relief experienced on stepping out into the sunlight. The world seemed a far better place than I had thought it to be; the sky looked bluer, and I almost came to liking my stable companion.

MacTavish hailed me with a mighty slap on the back and the biggest glass of rye whisky that had ever been "whisked" at me.

He thought it a huge joke and nicknamed me "the ticket-of-leave man." The policeman joined us at the bar, and with a broad grin asked me how I had enjoyed my little rest-cure? But this experience, however humorous it might have seemed to others, had proved too much for *me*, and I determined to indeed "beat it" with all speed.

#### XXXII.—O'Leary again—prosperous and fat.

Rather than part with a cent of my precious \$40, I persuaded my landlord to accept a bottle of Shipwright's best brilliantine, which had been sent to me by a friend who seemed to be quite ignorant as to the habits and customs of the country; a few pairs of socks, which



our alcoholic retainer would not have deigned to accept even with a "clock" thrown in ; the suit of clothes which had been completely ruined by my attempts at putting out the fire, and an odd assortment of gear which could not be of any possible use to him.

I considered myself very lucky indeed to have been able to arrange matters on this principle of barter.

On the following morning I boarded a train bound for Wollaboo. I had not sufficient money to get any farther.

Journeying to Wollaboo offers one nothing more interesting to relate than that which happens in an ordinary train from London to Brighton.

It was a long and tiresome journey, and my meals were not too frequent. I read a Canadian two-cent dreadful, and at intervals talked war with a lumberman whose ambition it was to become the Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies. He would have been, at the same time, the Admiral of the Fleet had it been possible.

Having arrived in Wollaboo, I immediately set out to find the whereabouts of my old friend O'Leary.

As luck would have it, I found him in the same boarding-house in which I had left him some few months back.

His delight knew no bounds, and he pranced about like an old dog who thinks one is about to take him for a walk.

My dear friend the landlady embarrassed me by planting a resounding kiss on both my cheeks, which made me feel more like a homecoming hero than a rolling stone which had gathered nothing except two days' imprisonment.

O'Leary looked prosperous and had grown quite fat. He had obtained a good position in a firm of bankers, and took great care to impress upon me, and all young men in general, that the old men are the best in the long run.

When O'Leary heard that I should have to find a job so as to be able to save some money for my fare home, he was unkind enough to say that there was practically no plumbing work to be done in the city (*vide* Chapter VII). He suggested that we should take a stroll round, and that in the meantime I could share his bedroom.

Our stroll round consisted in gazing at the bulletins outside the offices of the *Wollaboo Telegram*.

On our return home I discovered a man sticking up a notice outside the door of a "quick lunch" counter, advertising the want of a reliable man to serve behind the counter.

This seemed to me as manna sent from Heaven, and I immediately offered my services and was accepted without question.

**XXXIII.—I become a Quick-Lunch Expert.**

It seemed to be my fate to live in a gastronomic world.

Everything I touched turned to food—and I had come in search of gold.

Once again I was in the throes of potatoes and pumpkin pies.

A "quick lunch" counter in the Western World is for the purpose of feeding materialists who have only one thought, and that is money-making. They have no time to sit at table and eat a Christian meal in a Christian fashion; they must come to a counter and be served as quickly as human hands can manipulate plates and cups. Perspiring, white-coated men throw food at them (there is no other way conceivable) in response to monosyllabic orders.

I had joined the White-coats, and if I were to keep my enviable position, it remained for me to throw better or at least as well as my colleagues.

Everything in this world demands practice before perfection is attained.

I soon realised that it wasn't the easiest thing in the world to produce food à la

Maskelyne and Devant as served in this particular restaurant.

No sooner had the word "pie" escaped from a staccato-tongued individual, than the pie was thrown before him with miraculous speed and the clatter of a Gatling gun.

Woe unto him, who kept these busy-bodied money-grabbers waiting the decimal part of a minute, for it were better for him that a hundredweight of beans were hanged round his neck and that he were "ground" in the depth of a coffee machine.

The first gentleman (excuse this *lapsus linguae*) whom I had the "pleasure" to serve asked me for a "blueberry and coffee."

It sounded to me more like "Bloomsbury coffee" or "Bloomsbury coffin." Not having yet understood the vernacular of the "quick luncheonites," I gazed at my customer in uncertainty. This I soon learnt to be a crime, for he should already have been served by the last "e" in "coffee."

Unfortunately the delay opened the flood-gate of his wrath.

"Hi, you gink! B-l-u-e-b-e-r-r-y and c-o-f-f-e-e! Understand King's English?"

I replied that I understood nothing else, but such gentle irony was lost upon this zoological product.

Blueberry? . . . I supposed it to be

a pie of some kind, and gazed rather blankly at the formidable array on the shelves immediately behind me.

"Hurry up, there."

One of my colleagues pointed out a blueberry pie, and wishing to show my irritable and impatient customer that I was no greenhorn, I threw it down before him, but to my bitter chagrin the pie slid from the plate straight into the lap of this infidel.

If every spirit in Hades had been let loose there could not have been more of a disturbance.

He vowed every vengeance that man could devise. He threatened to beat hell out of me! (a favourite expression in Canada meaning absolutely nothing). He would string me up on the nearest lamp-post (most difficult, as they were mostly arc lamps), &c.

I met this vituperative onslaught with commendable calm, and told him that if he had any experience at all of "a quick lunch counter" he should have caught the pie, for his mouth was large enough to catch anything within reason.

My enviable customer was so surprised that I should dare to answer him, that he meekly picked up his pie, which reposed at his feet, and proceeded to gobble it at a speed which astonished as well as disgusted me.

I was relieved to perceive that this disturbance and "pi(e)us lapsus" had not in any way disturbed the remainder of the "luncheonites," who seemed far too busy swallowing their food and "beating it" than taking any interest in a gentleman whose pie preferred the ground to his mouth.

During the afternoons few people came to the restaurant, and our time was occupied in washing up tin plates and mugs ready for the evening onslaught.

O'Leary paid me frequent visits after his business hours, and when he did so I would always contrive to find him the biggest pie in the place, and very often managed to slip him an extra slice.

He was exceedingly surprised to find how quickly I accustomed myself to the business.

After filling six or more varying and varied positions, it does not take long to turn one's hand to anything.

If I had been offered a policeman's job, or asked to join a trapeze-artistes troupe, I should probably have accepted without even giving the difficulty of the work a minute's thought.

However, I soon got very sick of serving food at an express speed, and seeing men stuff it down as if their lives depended upon it. Obviously we must feed, and

true it is that there are times when the luncheon hour cannot be well spared, but this seemed to me to be an absurd exaggeration.

In what way their digestions suffered I have no idea, but can well imagine that they must have been liverish individuals indeed.

The constant sight of food and the eating of it completely took my own appetite away, and I could eat nothing.

I had made quite a passable number of dollars, as tips had been plentiful, but having already been nearly one month amid this turmoil, I felt that I could not possibly face another. The heat of the restaurant and my inability to touch any food except when feeding others, and the fact that I had to think of getting back to England, decided me to give up my job and proceed to Montreal.

For the second time I bade O'Leary good-bye, and on this occasion we both felt that the probability of seeing one another again was small.

We might meet in a garrison town on the battlefields of Europe, but, as it happened, we never *did* see one another again.

Whether he still lives, or whether he lies with the heroic dead in France or elsewhere, is only for me a matter of conjecture.

If I know anything of O'Leary, he died in the foremost ranks, facing the common enemy with the same brave smile as he faced the many vicissitudes which we had shared together.

Wherever he is—I salute him as a very gallant Irish gentleman.

#### XXXIV.—I try to Enlist.

Montreal pushed me once again into the arms of the Spectre—work; once again it had to be procured somehow or somewhere.

Home was getting nearer, but home still was many weary miles away, and the last lap was sure to be the worst.

The weather was becoming very cold as the long Canadian winter kept drawing nearer.

I possessed a coat, but not one of sufficient warmth. Most of the Canadian coats were lined with beaver, rabbit or opossum. A coat of this kind was a luxury, and I could not entertain the thought of possessing one. Even the blanket coat for the smaller purse was more than my frail pocket could stand.

There are few towns that are more cold than Montreal. The winter brings blinding blizzards and many feet of snow. The wind cuts through one like a razor blade,



and, although it was only the beginning of October, I felt the falling temperature most keenly.

I discovered a cheap boarding-house which smelt horribly of stale vegetables and dirty beings ; the landlady was blest with six disreputable urchins of varying ages and sizes. The husband, when sober, would beat his wife and clear his children out of the house. When drunk he slept ; and in the home on such occasions there reigned a sublime peace.

However, I was glad enough to discover any hole or corner which would preserve me from the chill blasts of the Montreal streets.

The few meals I had, I shared with the family, and it was my fate to sit next to the youngest offspring, a perverse young gentleman, whose habit was to wave his soup spoon about to the danger of my scarce linen.

These meals, although uncomfortable and sometimes beastly, were interesting. The conversation turned mainly on the exploits of "father"; as "father" was drunk five days out of the seven, these were varied and not altogether reputable.

My landlady usually greeted me with a tale of woe, and insisted upon showing me her fresh collection of bruises which she acquired on the sixth and seventh days.

It was indeed a sordid life, and I was amazed that human beings, professing to have become more or less civilized, could have possessed the patience to withstand it.

Whether we are civilized or not, is not for me to discuss in these pages, but personally I very much question it.

My landlady was decidedly shrewish, and I felt certain that I should not last two minutes in the house unless I paid regularly, and already was sure my lease would be but brief—"A short lease and a merry one."

Well, so be it! I had already "spotted" a sheltered corner by the Public Library should I have to relinquish my bed.

It did not seem to me there would be more repose in the near vicinity of Burton's "Treatise on Melancholy" or Plutarch's "Morals."

It was at this juncture of my fortunes that I conceived the idea of trying to enlist in a Canadian regiment. I was not very enthusiastic about it, desiring, as was quite natural, to be with my own compatriots and friends, and never having suffered too well at Canadian hands, I was somewhat loth to find myself in a regiment full of them.

Nevertheless, I thought it more advisable to be fed and clothed until such time

as I could get transferred into a regiment in England. It would be better than to remain penniless in a town where work was difficult to find and where there were no friends. Not only that, I was of little use here to anybody, and would be more useful in uniform.

It was told me that one of the best regiments in Canada—the Canadian Guards—had their headquarters in Montreal.

I paid them a visit, and found the men to be still in peace-time uniform, which differed little from that of the English Fusiliers.

Feeling sure, with my public school experience, that I should have no difficulty in enlisting; presenting myself at the barracks' gate, I came face to face with an ominous-looking bayonet, which the sentry thrust within an inch of my somewhat empty stomach.

The sentry being a typical Canadian, a good (?) reception was a foregone conclusion. He asked me my business; on telling him I wished to join the Colours he laughed outright, and told me that this wasn't a Labour Bureau.

I indignantly replied that, although I might be out of work, it wasn't for that reason I wished to fight for my country. Whereupon he shrugged his shoulders and summoned the corporal of the guard.

The corporal of the guard, on learning my business, sniffed; looked me up and down as though taking stock of some bird, in order to find out whether it were fat enough to warrant its neck being wrung.

"Regiment's full," he vouchsafed, laconically.

As this piece of information did not satisfy me, I asked if I might see the sergeant-major.

The corporal replied that it would be a waste of time, and with a wicked grin told me to follow him.

The sergeant-major was a portly gentleman, who had once, no doubt, been a soldier, but how long ago it was difficult to imagine.

He reminded me a little of Porthos in the "Three Musketeers," but the romance which attached to that gentleman of fortune was completely eliminated in his case.

He was the very acme of rotundity. His stomach gently rubbed the deal table at which he sat, and his short and stodgy legs, though stretched out at full length, seemed barely to touch the ground. I could not conceive it possible that he could march a hundred yards without expiring.

His moustache, alarmingly waxed, gave him a fierce expression, and his little hog-eyes were scarcely to be seen, being nearly hidden by his balloon-like cheeks, which

were as red as the tail-light of a motor-car.

His greeting to the corporal was typical :

"What yer got there, corporal? Guess it looks like an Englishman."

"'E's looking for a job, sir," replied the corporal with a giggle ; "says 'e wants to kill 'Uns."

"Lookin' for a job, is 'e? Wants to kill 'Uns, does he? Well, there ain't no job with the Guards," snapped the sergeant-major, puffing his cheeks to such an extent that I felt there would be an accident. "If 'e wants to kill Germans, he'd better beat it with some regiment what 'as the 'opes of gettin' to the Old Country in the next year or so. Anyhow, there ain't no room 'ere, and, besides, we ain't too partial to English blokes ; they know too much, or if they don't, they think they do. Same thing."

"Corporal Iggins, yer can march the pris . . . ner—the 'ero—back through the same way as 'e came in."

I wasn't to be disposed of quite so quickly. I looked the sergeant-major squarely in the eyes, and asked him if that was the way to speak to a likely recruit.

"Likely!" he blustered, "not bluming likely. 'Ere, my man, beat it ; try the Fusiliers or any other blinkin' regiment, it ain't no go 'ere."

"Sergeant-major," I replied, "if I had my way I'd give you ten days' solitary confinement, first for your damned insolence, and secondly for your physical betterment."

"Git!" he roared, "or I'll heave yer into the guard-room, yer G——d d——d Britisher!"

I turned my back on him, but as a parting shot I couldn't help telling him that if he *ever* came near the Germans they couldn't possibly miss him. I can hear the old devil's blasphemous cursings in my ear to this very day.

It can well be imagined that I was somewhat discouraged, and came to the conclusion that it would be far better to wait until I could get back to dear old England.

**XXXV.**—I nearly reached the Doss-house—but, with the help of a Policeman, took a Seat in the Park.

I returned to my dingy room in no happy frame of mind.

On arriving I found the house in a state of chaos. My amiable landlord was sober; it was Friday, and he was busily engaged in beating his wife. He was administering to her a sound thrashing with the rolling-pin. In odd corners of the kitchen his progeny were crouched in various

attitudes of fear, emitting moans and cries, which sounded more like the wailings of native high priests than the healthy shrieking of children. Every time the poor wretched woman, who had been uncereemoniously thrust face downwards upon the kitchen table, shrieked with unusual volume of sound (rolling-pins are uncomfortable things to receive on one's back), the wailing grew in intensity. If someone had been there to strike the bottom of a saucepan it would have given a passable idea of some Eastern sacrifice.

It has never been one of my principles to interfere between husband and wife, having known many dire consequences as the sequel, but I couldn't in this instance stand by as a cold-blooded witness of the lambasting of this helpless woman.

I shouted to him to cease, but was told to mind my own business. This I had expected, so I made a rush at him. My onslaught diverted his attention from his wife, who on rising immediately came to her husband's rescue.

Instead of being grateful for her deliverance she started by heaping insults upon my head, telling me to leave her man alone.

This I was more than willing to do, and feeling disgusted retired to my quarters, mentally hoping that he would continue and give her a good one on my behalf.

I have never understood the psychology of such people. I never have, and never will again, interfere in domestic troubles ; it never does a particle of good, and never will, as long as the world continues to wag.

The next morning my landlady seemed to have forgotten the incident ; and but for a few bruises she did not seem to be very much the worse, excepting perhaps in her temper, which had reached rock-bottom.

I tramped the streets of Montreal during the day in the hope of finding some work, but returned in the evening, having found none.

To those who have never experienced the terrible necessity of being obliged to tramp the streets in search of bread and butter, I can only say I sincerely hope they never will. It is most heart-breaking and depressing. Although this was my experience nearly ten years ago I have never forgotten it, and cannot but feel the greatest sympathy for the poor desolate atoms of humanity one sees so often in London. Therefore, poor match-sellers, organ-grinders, *et hoc genus omne*, ye have, if nothing more, my pity.

The next night was to be the last one for me to spend under a roof unless the good fortune to discover some sort of a job came my way. My luggage would have to be left in the care of my landlady, for there was no other place for it.



The following day was as unlucky as the previous one, and in the evening I had to break the news to my landlady. She promised to look after my trunk, but more than that she could not possibly do, nor did I ask her.

Thus for the first time in my career I found myself without a roof over my head and under the uncomfortable necessity of having to sleep on a park seat or in the vicinity of the afore-mentioned library and the "Anatomy of Melancholy." I chose the library, as there were more chances of not being disturbed by an eagle-eyed policeman.

Having passed an endless number of luncheon counters, pastry shops and sundry places which all gave forth a pleasant and irritating odour of succulent fried steaks and palatable dishes, having gazed on the same with longing, having read that Harry Tate was playing at the Orpheum in his celebrated sketch entitled "Fishing" (the irony of it struck me somewhat forcibly), I sought refuge in the angle of the library buttress, having first had to scale a difficult paling.

Having satisfied myself that there was no "rozzer" within the neighbourhood, I wrapped my coat about me—a poor protection from the cold—lay down and tried to sleep. Feeling very tired and hungry

I dozed off, and must have slept for two hours or more, but was rudely awaked from my slumber by a piercing ray of light.

Instinctively I guessed that the arm of the law, ever long, had discovered me and that I should have to take up my bed and walk.

Fortunately the policeman was kindly disposed, and instead of running me in as a vagrant, he suggested that I should go to a doss-house.

A doss-house was the last place I intended to visit. Doss-houses are, in my opinion, very beastly holes, and I infinitely preferred God's pure air to the foulness of such places and the contact with my poor and unfortunately unclean fellow-creatures.

Telling the kind-hearted "minion of the law" my objections to a doss-house, which made him laugh, he replied that people in my position couldn't afford to have scruples.

Scruples are luxuries; they are only for those who can afford to have them.

My friend asked me for the reason of my being in such an unfortunate position, and having told him as much as I thought was good for him to know, he removed his helmet and scratched his head.

Now, those of you who have studied the



I WAS AWAKED BY A PIERCING LIGHT.

psychology of a policeman know that this is a practically sure sign that this very worthy and much respected gentleman is in the act of thinking, and the more he scratches the harder he thinks.

Being quite certain that this particular policeman was no different from any other of his species (there are undoubtedly exceptions), I held my peace and let him think, feeling sure he was trying to solve the difficulty of my very precarious position.

Nor was I wrong in my surmise, for his round and good-natured face suddenly lit up with a broad beam of satisfaction.

"Young man," said he, "I have the very thing for you. My young brother has been working in E's Stores at the ribbon counter, and he has to vamoose; he's going farming or something. Now, he's got to find a substitute, and I'll nip it to him, quietly and gently-like, that I've found the very bloke who can take his place. Get me—Steve!"

Get him! It was all very sudden. To find myself transported as if by magic from a cold, hard bed, no future, and still less food, to the precincts of a ribbon counter . . . a bed and food, was sufficient to stagger the most unemotional human. The thought of ribbons was quite sufficient to make me reel.

"Well," exclaimed my good Samaritan, a little hurt that I did not respond with immediate enthusiasm, "yer don't seem mighty tickled by this ribbon business, but it's jake" (i.e., B.C. for "fine").

"Tickled"! Why, I was more than tickled, I was very nearly choked, and thanked him in the most profuse terms, which quite embarrassed, but nevertheless pleased him.

"That's right. Well, I can't do no more for you to-night. I'm on my beat, and I advise you to 'beat it' too. Try a park seat for a bit or one in the square . . . Guess they'll leave you alone. Meet me to-morrow at X.'s and I'll introdooce my brother."

This was a great piece of luck, but I felt too hungry to be very optimistic about anything.

I sat down on a seat in the square and tried to sleep, but was too hungry even for that. I sat there until dawn, and never in my life did time drag to such an extent.

I went round to my landlady and begged for, and was granted, a wash. This refreshed me. I think the old Jezebel must have guessed what straits were mine, for she asked me to stay and have breakfast, which goes a long way to prove that there is a great deal of good in the worst of us.

Well, there is an awful lot of bad in the best of us, too.

**XXXVI.**—I emulate Kipps at a Ribbon Counter, and like him get the "Push."

I met my friend the policeman at the appointed time, and he introduced me to his brother, who advised me to accompany him immediately to the Stores, so as to make certain of getting the job.

We hurried round, and were lucky enough to find the manager in his office.

He was so polite to us that I could scarcely conceive it possible that he was a Canadian.

He asked me about my previous experience of shops. I answered, not untruthfully, that I had been in most of the London shops, but had no knowledge of ribbons.

"Ribbons," said the manager, waving his arm in disdain, "are nothing; they are merely woman's bait to catch men." I have pondered over this remark since, and am not at all sure that he wasn't right. Ribbons have often caught my eye, and I have more than once nibbled at the bait.

The next day was to see me start work, which meant that I would once again sleep in a bed.

Having thanked my benefactors, I re-

turned to my landlady and told her of my good fortune. She seemed genuinely pleased, and gave me back my old room, in which were lying my few belongings untouched and evidently scorned.

Before getting into bed, I wrote a long letter to my father asking him to help me to return home, telling him of my anxiety to join some regiment and proceed to France.

The next day, with some trepidation, I took my stand behind a mahogany counter, and owing to my "experience in London shops," was put in charge of the ribbon department.

It is difficult to conceive how foolish I felt, not knowing the least thing concerning ribbons, nor understanding a shop's routine.

Did they ask for a yard of "baby ribbon" I didn't know where to look for it, nor did I even know what it looked like.

Every second of the day charming little shop-girls rushed at me with a book and said "Sign, please," and I signed.

I might have been signing the Peace Treaty for all I knew about it, but thought it better to do what I was asked in the hope that it would cover my ignorance.

I found this kind of life very fatiguing, extremely dull and irritating.

Women when they go shopping are foolish and inconsiderate to a degree. They never know what they want, and make more fuss over a quarter-yard of ribbon than things of vastly more importance.

I was longing to get news from my father, and had made up my mind that if there were no reply in the space of three weeks I should try and ship across on a remount steamer. In the meantime I had to be content with serving ribbons to the female sex.

On the Monday there was to be the Annual Autumn Sale, and from what my fellow-workers told me, it was going to be a very hard and unpleasant experience.

No sooner had the Stores opened their doors on the Monday morning than the ribbon counter was besieged by a shrieking mob of Amazons. Never in my life have I heard such a hubbub. There wasn't a ribbon in the place that was worth the excitement. However, the women seemed to think differently.

I endeavoured to concentrate on one female at a time, but found this to be utterly impossible, for women are inconsequent beings at the best of times, and from them—in a Sale and at a Sale—good Lord deliver us!

The universe seemed to me, at that



moment, to be piled sky-high with divers ribbons of many colours, and my eyes refused to differentiate between one colour and another. Thus I would show a green ribbon when blue was asked for, and red instead of yellow.

I became as nervous as a lodging-house cat. Nothing seemed to satisfy anybody. Among this turmoil there never ceased the irritating and nasal sound of "Sign . . . Sign." (Oh for a sign which was not given to us.)

At the end of the day I just had the strength to clutch a rye whisky and then go straight to bed. The night was passed in dreaming of women with distorted features who were about to hand me wreaths of ribbons.

During my fevered dreams I encountered my spectral pillow which I tore to ribbons, bolstered up by the feeling that I was successfully eliminating all that could cause a *casus belli* to the harpies I feared to meet on the morrow.

The second day of the Sale proved to be worse than the first.

Friends, enemies and relations dropped their occupations, having heard that ribbons were being sold at surprising prices, with the result that my counter at about midday resembled a miniature storming of the Taku Forts.

Unfortunately a tragic event occurred on the fourth day of this "Bargain" orgy.

Two ladies of advanced years, or at any rate old enough to know better, came to the unanimous decision that they desired the same quarter of a yard of ribbon.

They both grabbed at the wished for treasure at one and the same time, and, oblivious of the crowd that surrounded them, commenced a shrill discourse as to who had the better right to it.

It was obvious that these Mænads were acquaintances of long standing, and that they had met in the ring on other occasions, for they began (much to the amusement of those standing round) to give a very lucid and not too-repeatable history of their respective pasts. It was at this juncture that I thought it my duty to interfere as delicately as possible, and suggested, in dulcet tones, that as did Solomon in the days of old, so should I now counsel—that the ribbon should be divided in twain.

This advice unfortunately had the very opposite effect to that which I had contemplated, for they threw all caution and self-restraint to the winds, and before I had time to interfere, these dear ladies had torn the ribbon to threads.

The noise of this scandalous turmoil had brought the floor manager round to

investigate, and naturally I was blamed for having been insulting and impatient, with the result that the ribbon, which the dear peaceful souls had wanted to buy, was entirely ruined, as were my own prospects of making a successful mediator or salesman, or ever understanding women when bargain bent—or any other time.

**XXXVII.—I thought I had struck a Friend,  
but he proved a Fraud.**

Finding myself again “non compos jobi,” I felt like the man who, before he commits suicide, wishes to have a last fling, and so drown his sorrows before plunging into the Styx, and sticks to nothing.

Unfortunately I hadn't sufficient of the world's goods to contemplate anything more dangerous than a 5-cent “hokey-pokey,” and being in no way inclined to end my life, I resolutely turned my mind from the ice, and concluded that I could spend a “racy evening” on roller skates for a few cents.

On my way to this noisy and dust-swept hall I passed the Roman Catholic Cathedral, and feeling that perhaps a quarter of an hour's meditation, before submitting myself to the “wheels of misfortune,” would help to uplift me in case I fell later

(which was more than probable), I ascended the cathedral steps and entered.

There are times when the atmosphere of a church is most comforting. The mystic atmosphere peculiar to most Catholic churches very often satisfies the æsthetic mind, or the person who wishes to detach himself from the grinding world without.

I am loth to admit that I played hide-and-seek with the verger, who was apparently chasing me for money—I had none to spare for him—even Christianity has to be mundane at times. I could scarcely wound the susceptibilities of the verger by telling him that the little cash I had at my disposal was to be devoted to the “ars glissandi.”

On my way to the V—— Skating Hall I purchased a sausage and some Boston baked beans, which were crudely wrapped up for me in the *New York Police Gazette*.

I ate this somewhat meagre meal on the crumbling steps of a Methodist Chapel, which seemed to hide shamefacedly in a dirty side street.

Unfortunately, the sausage being greasy, the paper stuck to the sausage, and, unwittingly, I swallowed a chorus lady's shapely calf, which was the adornment of the principal page of the journal. “Même les misérables ont quelquefois de la veine.”

My supper was rudely disturbed by the doleful dinging of the chapel bell, which is enough to drive any Christian, "methodical" or otherwise, whether supping, praying or meditating, to the furthest corners of the world, or at any rate to some peaceful and untrodden spot where there is a possibility of . . . . However, I'm digressing. I scrambled to my feet and hurried away.

It was a crude place of entertainment, decorated with festoons of faded paper flowers, which might have given the idea of "no flowers by request" to those who were about to write their last will and testament.

I modestly confess that on taking stock of my surroundings, I felt a little out of place.

In a corner a mechanical organ (very similar to those which are to be met with on a roundabout) blared forth strains of archaic melody.

The noise was deafening ; however, it is difficult to imagine the pastimes of the "plebs." being celebrated without "un tapage infernal."

I adorned my somewhat shabby boots with four wheels and joined the "rasping" throng.

Having no lady friends, I sat out when resting, with a little person dressed all in

blue, whose business it was to sell chocolates to people who didn't want them.

It was through my little seller of sweetmeats that I met Stracy, a journalist, attached to the staff of the *Montreal Rocket*.

He seemed a very pleasant fellow and apparently as lonely as myself.

When one is thirsting for companionship, it does not take long to unburden oneself—or at least for the inexperienced to do so.

I told him a great deal of my past history: my having left my home, my journalistic ambitions, and my hope for a speedy return.

Stracy seemed so interested that he suggested that I should try and join the staff of the *Rocket* as a temporary cub, and that in the meantime, I should accompany him on his rounds and get the hang of things.

I gratefully accepted his proposition and arranged to meet him the next day.

On turning this chance meeting with Stracy over in my mind that night, I felt that it had been rather foolish to promise anything to a man who was a total stranger to me. Not only that, I was daily expecting a letter from my father enclosing the wherewithal to enable me to shake the dust of Canada from off my feet and return home.

I had no money, which would be very awkward if Stracy had to be followed about on his journalistic errands.

However, a promise is a promise, so there was nothing for it but to keep my appointment with him.

We met at the *Rocket* offices, and he seemed so pleased to see me that I felt a little suspicious, not understanding why he should be so desirous of finding me a job in a profession in which there was already very close competition, and where promotion was very slow and difficult.

He led me straight to the City Editor's office, who also seemed pleased to see me, and unlike the last editor I had the "pleasure" to meet, he was exceedingly urbane and even diffident.

He promised that on showing any aptitude he would try and find a position in the office for me. In the meantime I could follow Stracy round and pick up as much as I could of the work. To my great surprise he told me that all my expenses would be paid.

All this sounded very well and most encouraging, but for some reason or another I had very little faith in either Mr. Stracy or the editor. It all seemed too easy.

However, he proved to be a very agreeable companion, and a very amusing one.

During our rambles about the town, he repeatedly asked me a great number of questions about my past life, how I had come to Canada, how I liked it, and so forth. This did not strike me as being unnatural at the time, and seeing no reason why he should not know, and having nothing to hide, I answered him very fully.

On one or two occasions he led me off to interview various strange individuals. One person had made over a million dollars in toothpicks or something of the kind, and seemed overjoyed at the possibilities of being able to talk about it and enjoy subsequent notoriety.

He told us that he was about to build a "Home for the Toothless," which was, I think, very unselfish of him.

Another interview was with an old lady of about a hundred and six, whose voice was so weak that we could scarcely hear what she said. She lay on a kind of couch, and had been there for years.

When the morning papers were issued, I was astonished to find that the Toothpick King had promised to give free toothpicks to all those who had the best and most healthy teeth; that the lady of a hundred and six was hale and hearty, sang in her bath every morning and walked three or four miles a day, drank beer, and never refused a second helping.

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I had a lot to learn in this business, and when I pointed out to Stracy that his account was a *trifle* exaggerated, he merely smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

XXXVIII.—I gain Prominence, but do not appreciate it.

On the fourth morning of my journalistic experiences I was in the act of reading my *Rocket*, before getting out of bed, when to my amazement and wrath I saw a full-length photo of myself and at least three paragraphs concerning my past life, the way I had left home, who my father was, my mother's age, and the number of children she had brought into the world. In other words, a full description of myself and family, and what the writer didn't know he had borrowed from his imagination.

But to add fuel to my wrath and indignation the story was signed by none other than my friend Stracy.

Now I began to understand a good many things. They had used me to get this "write up," which no doubt would be very good reading to a certain section of the public. I had been the scapegoat. Stracy had made my tongue wag for the benefit of his pen. I had felt that there was something wrong, and now I saw their whole business as clear as daylight.

Dressing with all speed I hurried round to the office. Not being quite sure what to do; whether to give the gentleman a jolly good hiding or make him fork out at least half the money he had been paid for the work.

On asking for the miscreant they told me that he had been sent to France as a reporter, and had left for New York that morning.

I demanded to see the City Editor, but was told that he had no time to see me.

I had been had. Done brown and absolutely fooled, but what annoyed me far more, was the fact that this was not the first time I had been hoaxed by these "cubs" of prey.

It was reminiscent of the time (some two years before) when I accompanied my father to New York.

As soon as the *Mauretania* had breasted the Statue of Liberty (rendered somewhat ironical to-day, and should be called the "Statute of Slaves") the passengers were assailed by a pack of garrulous "newspaper wolves" seeking food for "write-ups."

My father, having been previously warned against these American reporters by an experienced friend, took good care to be missing.

Unfortunately, some talkative and irre-

sponsible female, blurting out that I was his progeny, they swept down upon me, like a pack of pigeons from the eaves of St. Paul's Cathedral, and literally pecked me to death.

Finding myself in the midst of this "press-gang," I had no alternative but to give them a run for their money in the form of a highly-coloured account of my fellow-passengers, the saintly boyhood of my father, and a few choice tales of my 'Varsity days.

The next morning, to my horror and my father's wrath, every paper (in and out of New York) contained a full page on our respective pasts; flamboyantly described and fit to take the place of the worst "dreadful" ever published.

I was sorry for my poor parent, but, as for myself, it gave me an "entrée" to every respectable house in New York.

Thinking of this, I went back to my lodgings sadder and wiser, vowing vengeance on all journalists and reporters in general.

**XXXIX.—A Cable and some Cash—so exit  
Lofty.**

This was destined to be my last experience in Canada, nor did it grieve me, for that evening came a cable from my father telling me to collect the necessary moneys at a certain address and return home.



A CABLE AND SOME CASH, SO EXIT LOFTY.

It is difficult to realise with what relief I received this news.

It seemed years since I had seen my dear parents and enjoyed the comforts and the safe refuge of the paternal hearth. It seemed years since I had pawned my watch and sneaked out of dear old father's house, helped by the alcoholic but well-meaning butler, on my quest for gold.

Gold! Well, I hadn't seen much gold, but with the natural "*irony*" of fate I had discovered coal, which I was never to hear of again except on the "seamy" side.

I had been in Canada all these weary months; and although having faced many discomforts and not a little hardship, my eyes had not been blind to the humour of my various vicissitudes.

Although, if possible, returning a poorer man than when I left, I was not leaving Canada empty-handed, for my experience had brought home to me among many facts, first, that for an Old World man there is probably more new in the Old World than in the New; and secondly, that however hard and cruel life can sometimes be, and often is, yet it is fascinating, and the longer one lives the more one wishes to live; and, lastly and not least, that Home is the very best place to be in.

I have only one honest grouse, and that

is that we do not live long enough, and the more we learn the less we know.

And so I sailed away to the even harder school of war, to join those who were courageously facing the stern struggle for justice and an honourable peace over the common enemy, and to do my best in whatever position might fall to my lot.

And here my little narrative must draw to a close; the comedy is finished: it is time to ring down the curtain.

Just one last verse to young and old—  
which may prove helpful in this all too short a life—ere I go. It is this:—

“ Laugh, and the world laughs with you;  
Grouse, and you grouse alone,  
For the cheerful grin  
Will let you in  
Where grouchers are never known.”

So I make my bow.

THE END.

## OBITER DICTUM.

Regarding my flit across Canada, may I add an appendix in a more serious vein by reminding one and all that the Canada of to-day, as with the rest of the world, is not the Canada as I found it before the war. All that is best remains, but the Canadians' outlook in life (much the same as ours) has so broadened and their sympathies have been so widened out, that when I next have the pleasure of visiting our Western Empire, I am sure that much which I have found deserving of criticism will have ceased to be.

A steady inflow of the right type of woman, supervised and conducted by the right type of organization, will do more to make Canada as near perfection as is humanly possible, than all the laws and regulations, invented and administered, since the days of the Medes and Persians.

The present attempt of the Mormon fraternity to grab our girls for Utah should awaken this country, more especially the authorities, to the rottenness of quack religion, and to the need of diverting our surplus women to sound and health-giving occupations amidst congenial surroundings.

We have a surplus of women—Canada a deficiency. What is more obvious? It is the call of Nature. Nature begging this slow-moving country to wake up and put things right. Why not do it? Canada wants good material, and she will get it, for the weak and fainthearted do not, as a rule, hustle to emigrate. The weak for the reason that they cannot face the discomfort, and the fainthearted because they prefer anything rather than work. Those, therefore, who do go, will be the type which Canada needs and can always cater for.

If it were made easy for the sex to go, unattached men over there, who badly need wives, would not find it necessary to scour "Hill Stations," Broadway, the Euston Road and elsewhere, to secure them. It is more than probable that many of the girls who frequent such localities (forced by necessity to do so) have the wish and grit to get on when given the opportunity. Therefore it is possible, if properly managed, that many a lonely pre-emptor, farmer or engineer would secure a suitable helpmate through desirable channels.

Thus, all that is expedient on this side, to bring this happy and hygienic state of things to pass, is to prepare, for the stream of future Canadian mothers, a path swept



of fear, and paved with the promise of a home and happiness.

I am confirmed in this view by what the Rev. G. E. Lloyd, Bishop-elect of Saskatchewan, told the Fellows of the Royal Colonial Institute during the time I was reading the final proofs of this book.

In his paper, discussing the future of Western Canada and the flow of British emigration, Dr. Lloyd explained that, according to the Census return, there are something over forty million people in the British Isles at the present time, and in view of the competition of the United States, Germany, Japan and other countries, in matters of trade and manufactures, the figure is twelve million larger than it should be, and many of the troubles of Great Britain will not be solved until this fundamental matter is taken hold of in a large way.

Those extra millions should be encouraged, guided and transported, into our own vast territories, under our own flag, to build up our own Empire with our own blood and character.

The western part of Canada is a mixture of all nations. It consists of four enormous provinces: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, together with two pieces, New Ontario and a part of the Yukon. Since 1900

about three million people have poured into this territory. Of these, roughly, one-third are British.

Our problem is how to prepare, in the West, a nucleus of a nation, British and Christian, which will be at least fifty million strong, and that in much less time than people think.

In the first place there must be a large and sympathetic guidance of the excess millions in England to the West, so that the major part of the emigration shall be British.

Then two million pounds should be set aside every year to assist this emigration. One million should be used for training on the land in England. Of the other million, the third to be used as a gift of passage money, and one-third of the passage money to be loaned to the settler.

But whatever plan is adopted, it is imperative that it should be done quickly.

Another most important factor in this work of colonisation is the supply of teachers (men and women) of good British instincts to fill into the hundreds of single teachers' schools all over the prairie provinces. The Government pay good stipends and the work is both healthy and congenial.

By this means the rising generation of both foreigners and Western Americans

can be taught English loyalty and character as well as language.

The future of Canada is being decided now, and in the next ten years we shall have moulded the country on British and Christian lines; or it will have been gradually drawn towards the Western States of America. Our British day of opportunity is NOW.

I put that last word in capitals. It is the corner-stone of success, and without it there can be none.

If we mean to help our surplus population, and especially our marriageable women, we must do it *now*, and not wait until they are past their prime.

In any case a young woman between the age of twenty, twenty-five or thirty, can more readily adapt herself to new surroundings, and can certainly "rough it" more easily than a woman of middle age.

Men in Canada, more especially in the West, are crying out for the companionship of women. It is up to the women to hear them, and up to the Country to help the women to answer the call.

Kensington.

*January 25, 1922.*

